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**COUNTERING EXTREMISM: AN UNDERSTANDING
OF THE PROBLEM, THE PROCESS AND SOME
SOLUTIONS**

by

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June 2015

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ABSTRACT

This thesis proposes a framework for analyzing an individual's path to violent extremism. The CITIG framework (crisis, identity, ties, indoctrination, and grievances) offers a four-stage process of radicalization that begins with a personal crisis (Stage One), the construction of a new identity (Stage Two), activism (Stage Three), and the preparation and execution of a criminal or violent attack (Stage Four). This thesis begins by offering working definitions of key terms, and then uses the proposed CITIG framework along with the Violent Extremist Risk Assessment instrument to analyze four U.S.-based case studies: two examples of Islamic-inspired violent extremism, one case of white-supremacist violence, and one of eco-extremism. These cases further refine the proposed framework and reveal a three-pillar approach for countering extremism: prevention, intervention and interdiction.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALF/ELF	Animal Liberation Front/Earth Liberation Front
AQAP	Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CITIG	crisis, identity, ties, indoctrination, and grievances
COP	Community Oriented Policing
CUH	Center for Urban Horticulture
CVE	counter violent extremism
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
HRC	Human Resources Commission
ICT	identity control theory
LA ICG	Los Angeles Interagency Coordination Group
LAPD	Los Angeles Police Department
LEA	law enforcement agency
MPAC	Muslim Public Affairs Council
NGO	non-governmental organization
NYPD	New York Police Department
PIE	prevention, intervention, and ejection
SIP	Strategic Implementation Plan
SNA	social network analysis
SPJ	structured professional judgment
SSI	Safe Spaces Initiative
TTP	Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
U.S.	United States
UCE	undercover employee
UCR	uniform crime reports

VBIED	vehicle-borne improvised explosive device
VERA	violent extremism risk assessment
VNN	Vanguard News Network
ZOG	Zionist Occupied Government

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I. FRAMING THE PROBLEM

In the years following the attacks on September 11, the United States and its partners around the world have intensified their efforts to research, develop, and implement a variety of methods and models to prevent and counter violent extremism (CVE). Despite these efforts, there is evidence to suggest that violent extremism continues to spread within the United States, as evidenced by numerous thwarted attacks within the homeland, as well as a number of U.S. citizens traveling abroad to commit violent acts. The issue of concern is not just how to counter violent acts, but how to better understand the radicalization process in order to develop effective strategies to prevent radicalization from occurring.

Faced with a growing threat of violent extremism within the United States, the Obama administration initially addressed the issue of CVE in its *2010 National Security Strategy*. This document claimed that the “best defense against this threat are well informed and equipped families, local communities, and institutions.”¹ This strategy relies upon improving the resilience of at-risk communities through increased public-private partnerships, engagement with communities and citizens, and preventing attacks on the homeland through robust intelligence and law enforcement security capabilities.²

Alongside the *2010 National Security Strategy*, the White House published the *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*, in which they attempted to frame the problem of violent extremism and identify the best methods for CVE. Building upon the conceptualized CVE framework in the *2010 National Security Strategy*, the administration began to articulate a community based approach with the goal “to prevent violent extremists and their supporters from inspiring,

¹ Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy of the United States (2010)* (Washington, DC: Diane Publishing, 2010), 19.

² Ibid.

radicalizing, financing, or recruiting individuals or groups in the United States to commit acts of violence.”³

That same year, in order to transform their guidance into an executable concept, the White House published their *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* (SIP). The SIP went further in articulating the implementation of four shared objectives that are nested within these areas of action: “whole-of-government coordinating; leveraging existing public safety, violence prevention, and community resilience programming; coordination of domestic and international CVE efforts; and addressing technology and virtual space.”⁴ The SIP tasked these objectives to be executed by all government agencies based on their specific capacities.

In an effort to fulfill these tasks, local law enforcement agencies (LEAs) have begun to apply the strategy of Community Oriented Policing (COP). Examples of this are found in the three pilot CVE cities of Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and Boston that utilize COP to engage local communities. The goal of these initiatives is to overcome cultural barriers, develop rapport, and address community grievances in an attempt to prevent the spread of extremism and recruitment. These efforts have resulted in greater community awareness and interaction with local LEAs, which together have had the effect of increased reporting of potential extremism within the community.

Despite these initial reports and efforts designed to raise awareness of CVE vulnerabilities, Jerome P. Bjelopera, a specialist in organized crime and terrorism, prepared a report for the Congressional Research Service in February of 2014 titled *Countering Violent Extremism in the United States*. In the report, Bjelopera identifies numerous shortcomings with the CVE SIP,⁵ which can be consolidated into three main ideas. The first is a lack of clearly defined terms involving extremism in order to establish

³ White House, *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* (Washington, DC: Diane Publishing, 2011), 3.

⁴ White House, *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* (Washington, DC: Diane Publishing, 2011), 4.

⁵ Jerome P. Bjelopera, *Countering Violent Extremism in the United States* (CRS Report No. R42553) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), 24–28.

a common language. Second is the lack of an effective framework that explains the complex process of radicalization to provide a common understanding among those involved in CVE. Third is the lack of identified catalytic and protective attributes associated with the radicalization process, from which effective prevention and intervention strategies can be developed by community based agencies and organizations. This report, in other words, points to some major short-comings of the current approach to countering violent extremism.

This thesis aims to address these three identified deficiencies of the CVE SIP. It will begin by offering working definitions of the terms associated with CVE, including radicalization, extremism, violent extremist, and criminal extremist. Furthermore, this thesis proposes a distinction between violent extremists and criminal extremists; the former aims to harm people, the latter engages in harm to property, but deliberately avoids harming people. Second, in addition to definitions, it will propose a four stage process of radicalization that includes a personal crisis in Stage One, contact with extremists, indoctrination and the framing of grievances in Stage Two, activism in Stage Three, and either a criminal or violent act in Stage Four. And third, the thesis will attempt to identify key catalytic and protective attributes associated with the radicalization process with the aim of using these key variables to create effective intervention strategies.

A. RESEARCH QUESTION

These efforts are part of the general research question of this thesis, which is: How can U.S. efforts in CVE be improved to prevent, intervene, and interdict violent extremism? Within this broad question, the thesis will also ask more specific questions, including what is extremism? What is the process of radicalization? And how can community mobilization address extremism?

B. FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This thesis constructs a framework of radicalization that focuses specifically on the individual's path to extremism. This framework proposes that the process begins with a crisis that leads to the formation of an extremist identity, contact with extremists,

indoctrination into an ideology, and identification of grievances through framing. Consistent with this outline, we name the new radicalization framework the CITIG (crisis, identity, ties, indoctrination, and grievances) framework.

The framework consists of four stages. Stage One begins with a personal crisis that is exacerbated by antecedent conditions, such as a lack of strong social ties that typically provide an individual with support networks and grounding within their existing identity and social structure. The result is the search for a resolution to the crisis, which can lead to the formation of an extremist identity.

Stage Two begins with a search to resolve the crisis, which leads an individual to make new ties or find an ideology, either of which results in the formation of a new identity that will continue to evolve throughout the radicalization process. Stage Two also consists of the reframing of the personal crisis and the linking of the evolving identity to a grievance through indoctrination that may proceed, or follow, contact with extremists. In an effort to gain acceptance and approval (identity verification) in the new identity, individuals will begin activism.

In Stage Three, the individual begins activism on behalf of the perceived grievances associated with the new extremist identity. Activism serves three functions: cementing the extremist identity; providing a sense of meaning and belonging for the individual in the extremist community; and providing a mechanism to address grievances. The CITIG framework further proposes that, through repeated identity verification and the development of extremist ties, the extremist identity will rise to the master identity position late in Stage Three, or at the beginning of Stage Four.

Progression to Stage Four occurs when there is a perceived lack of a resolution mechanism for the grievance, or crisis, and the individual believes that criminal or violent action will be beneficial. The extremist begins operational planning to execute a specific action, criminal or violent, which they believe will force a resolution to their grievance.

The thesis then uses the CITIG framework, along with the violent extremism risk assessment instrument (VERA), to methodically analyze cases in order to test its validity in the radicalization process. VERA is the first risk assessment instrument developed

specifically for violent extremists, and includes a wide array of variables that are organized in five categories: attitudes/mental processes, contextual factors, historical factors, protective factors, and demographic factors. The thesis then uses the model to investigate four case studies of individuals who have become radicalized and engaged in acts of violent or criminal extremism in the United States: two of the cases involve Islamic-inspired extremism, one involves white supremacy, and the last eco-extremism. The individuals for the case studies were selected from the FBI's list of convicted terrorists. From the FBI's list, cases were selected based upon ideological categories (Islamic-inspired, white supremacist, and eco-extremist) and the availability of documented information. Information for each case study is drawn from court documents and other publically available information. The case studies also include social and contextual factors to better understand the conditions that fuel extremism. By comparing different ideological forms of extremism, the goal is to find common and unique causes of extremism within each of these movements.

The first case study is Faisal Shahzad, a violent extremist who attempted to detonate a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) in Times Square on May 1, 2010. The second case study investigates Mohamud Osman Mohamud, a violent extremist who attempted to detonate a VBIED at the Christmas tree lighting ceremony in Portland, Oregon on November 26, 2010. The third case study considers a white supremacist, Kevin Harpham, who planted an explosive device at the Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Day Parade in Spokane, Washington on January 17, 2011. The final case considers the radicalization of eco-extremist Briana Waters, who took part in two separate arson attacks aimed at stopping perceived destruction of the environment in Seattle, Washington, on May 21, 2001, and Susanville, California, on October 15, 2001.

Information for each case study is drawn from court documents and other publically available information. In addition to focusing on their personal lives, the case studies will also include each extremist's social and contextual factors to better understand the conditions that fuel extremism. By comparing different ideological forms of extremism, the goal is to find common and unique causes of extremism within each of these movements.

C. FINDINGS

Applying the CITIG framework to a diverse set of case studies reveals a number of similarities across ideological lines that indicate the possibility for a universal longitudinal radicalization process. Additionally, using VERA, the thesis identifies important attributes in each stage. However, given that VERA was developed specifically for assessing violent extremists, we recommend a separate risk assessment instrument be developed for criminal extremists.

The risk factors identified in the case studies also provide insight into developing effective programs to counter extremism. Specifically, we find support for the Los Angeles Interagency Coordination Group's (LA ICG) three pillar framework of prevention, intervention, and interdiction. However, due to the low number of reliable risk factors at the individual level, prevention programs should address local factors at the community level. While every community is different, prevention should focus on the following factors: grievances, the extremist ideologies, the acceptance of violence, awareness of the problem in the community, and the development of both prosocial and cross-cutting ties to build socially cohesive communities that provide support to those who experience crises.

Intervention, by its nature, needs to focus on individuals who have demonstrated risk factors. Risk factors for intervention in Stage Two are extremist indoctrination, contact with extremists, attachment to an extremist ideology, and perceptions of injustice. In Stage Three, activism, they are dehumanization of an identified target, glorification of criminal or violent action, and, in some cases, travel abroad for training or fighting. Intervention may still occur in Stage Four, where individuals are preparing for a specific attack. Due to the relatively consistent attributes associated with stages two and three, intervention efforts can be applied to a broad range of factors that mutually support each other. Ultimately, intervention efforts should sever extremist ties and build prosocial ties, address the personal crisis that began the process, counter the extremist ideology, identify positive outlets for social change, and develop the belief that crime and violence do not solve problems.

The interdiction pillar is primarily a law enforcement function, but the relationship between communities and law enforcement remains critical in this stage. Law enforcement should separate intelligence collection efforts from community engagement associated with prevention and intervention efforts in order to maintain trust with communities. Also, law enforcement should work with community leaders to divert individuals into intervention programs rather than confinement with no specialized de-radicalization programs.

D. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The remainder of this thesis is broken into five chapters. Chapter II provides working definitions to address the wide range of extremism and reviews the relevant literature on defining extremism. Chapter III reviews several leading models of radicalization and proposes a new framework, the CITIG framework, for the radicalization process. Chapter III also introduces VERA as the basis for identifying specific attributes during the radicalization process. Chapter IV analyzes two Islamic-inspired case studies using the CITIG framework and VERA. Chapter V analyzes two case studies, one white supremacist and one eco-extremist, using the CITIG framework and VERA. Chapter VI reviews the findings from the case studies and presents the refined framework. Chapter VI also reviews existing programs that counter violent extremism and recommends support for Los Angeles interagency coordination group's (LA ICG) three pillar framework to counter violent extremism.

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II. DEFINITIONS OF EXTREMISM

A. WHAT IS EXTREMISM?

Among academics, policy makers and various government agencies, opinions differ as to what extremism is and is not, which leads to disagreement on how to properly define this phenomenon. Compounding this problem is the large spectrum of ideas and behaviors that are classified as extremist. This lack of clarity creates problems when attempting to frame extremism, understand the conditions under which it occurs, and develop effective methods to counter extremism.

In this chapter, we will attempt to provide a working definition of extremism based on academic research. This chapter will begin by providing foundational definitions of key terms involved with extremism, including radicalization and sub-categories of extremism. We will then divide extremism into two components: an ideational spectrum that ranges from normal to extreme beliefs and a behavioral spectrum from latent to violent behaviors. This conceptual approach provides an understanding of the difference between normal and extremist ideas and the range of behaviors observed in extremist groups.

B. DEFINING EXTREMISM

In 1999, the Future Developments in Terrorism Conference held at University College Cork, Ireland, brought together law enforcement experts, policy makers and academics with experience and focus in the field of terrorism research. Throughout the conference, the groups of experts attempted to frame and define the term terrorism without great success. Of particular importance, the lines between terrorism, organized crime, and political violence were blurred, along with efforts to define state and non-state acts that have historically been coded as terrorism. These different uses of the term only confounded efforts to create a clear definition of terrorism.⁶

⁶ Maxwell Taylor and John Horgan, *The Future of Terrorism* (New York: Psychology Press, 2000), 5.

Sociologist Pamala Griset and criminal justice expert Sue Mahan argue that “the distinction is often blurry between terrorism, guerrilla warfare, conventional warfare, and criminal activity.”⁷ Despite the ambiguity of the term terrorism, psychologists Taylor and Horgan note that “whether it is appropriate or otherwise, the term ‘terrorism’ has wide currency and popular usage, and it is unlikely to disappear from our vocabularies.”⁸

A similar phenomenon occurs in attempting to create a definition of the term extremism. In the past decade a multitude of similar terms have been used interchangeably by academics, government officials, and law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to define and describe this broad concept. Terms like terrorist, jihadi, radical, and lone wolf are used alongside and interchangeably with the phrase *violent extremist*.⁹ Furthermore, U.S. government branches and agencies that do have a working definition of extremism each have their own description, which confuses both the problem and the desired goals for countering the problem.¹⁰

Properly defined terms are necessary to avoid confusion and allow for researchers to study a category that is relevant to policy makers and law enforcement. One example of the confusion caused by lack of clarity in defining extremism is Nidal Hassan’s attack on Fort Hood in 2009. The Department of Defense classified the attack as workplace violence, instead of violent extremism or terrorism, despite the assailant’s clear connection to the Al Qaeda leader Anwar Al-Awlaki and Hassan’s stated ideological motivation.¹¹ While this is only one example, the problem of labeling becomes important for categorizing and understanding the motives behind these acts.

In an effort to unite policy makers, law enforcement personnel, and academics, the White House published its strategy *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent*

⁷ Pamala L. Griset and Sue Mahan, *Terrorism in Perspective* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), xiii.

⁸ Taylor and Horgan, *The Future of Terrorism*, 5.

⁹ Sophia Moskalenko and Clark McCauley, “The Psychology of Lone-Wolf Terrorism,” *Counselling Psychology Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2011): 115–126; Alex P. Schmid, “Comments on Marc Sageman’s Polemic ‘the Stagnation in Terrorism Research,’” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 4 (2014): 587–95; Andrew Silke, “Holy Warriors: Exploring the Psychological Processes of Jihadi Radicalization,” *European Journal of Criminology* 5, no. 1 (2008): 99–123.

¹⁰ John Hayward, “Defining Terrorism,” *RedState*, April 16, 2013.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Extremism in the United States in 2011.¹² Its strategy defines violent extremists as “individuals who support or commit ideologically-motivated violence to further political goals.”¹³ Two issues arise from the White House’s definition of violent extremism. First, the definition narrowly restricts the motivation of violent acts to further political goals. Although political motivations are commonly rooted in beliefs and ideology, political goals are not the only reason that an individual may commit a violent act and therefore political goals are not relevant to the definition. The second issue is that the definition is too inclusive; rather than strictly referring to those who commit violence, it also encompasses those who merely support violence. The importance of this delineation will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Modifying the White House’s 2011 definition of a violent extremist, this thesis argues that a violent extremist is an individual who commits ideologically motivated violence with the intent to inflict human harm or death in support of his or her extremist beliefs and values.¹⁴

C. EXTREMIST BELIEFS VS. ACTIONS

Psychologists McCauley and Moskaleiko argue that in addition to the violent extremist, there are three additional categories of actors: inert, activist, and radical.¹⁵ These terms, as discussed above, have been used in different ways in the literature, creating confusion over what specifically constitutes one or the other and how the terms relate to each other. The specificity of and the relationship between the terms is necessary to understand the concept of extremism and to develop strategies to prevent future extremist acts.

In an effort to establish specific terms and the relationship between them, it is useful to divide the phenomenon of extremism into behavioral and ideational aspects.

¹² White House, *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*, 1.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskaleiko, “Some Things We Think We’ve Learned since 9/11: A Commentary on Marc Sageman’s ‘The Stagnation in Terrorism Research,’” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 4 (2014): 602.

Figure 1 envisions two separate continuums, one ideational and one behavioral. The unique characteristic of such a concept is that it accounts for the separate yet intersecting ranges of normal to extremist beliefs, and latent to violent behaviors. On the ideational continuum, normal is identified as beliefs and values that are socially accepted. As one moves to the right on the continuum, beliefs and values become less socially acceptable and therefore extreme. For example, throughout American society, activism is present in the form of peaceful protests in support of or against beliefs and values, such as equality or human rights. However, activism in support of beliefs and values outside of what society identifies as acceptable, such as activism in support of the racist ideals of the Ku Klux Klan, is also present, though in smaller numbers.

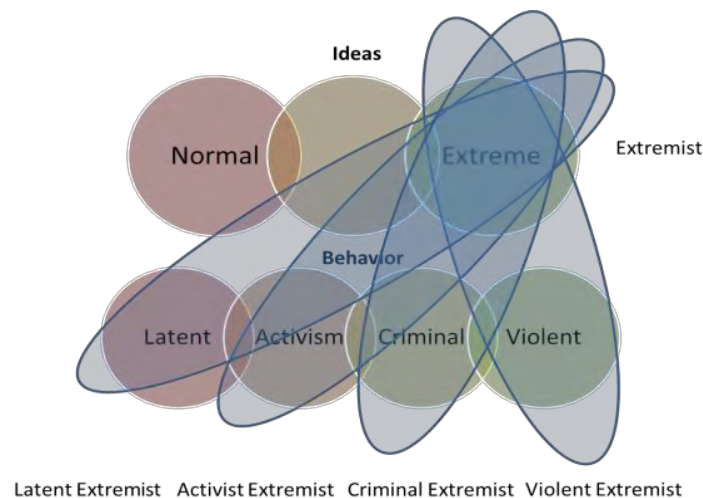


Figure 1. Disaggregating Ideas and Behavior

Several tools exist for better understanding the ideas and beliefs of a population. Polling data is one key source of information for understanding the range of values and norms on a particular idea or issue within a given population. Focus groups also allow researchers to understand the qualitative elements of local thoughts and views. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods provides both a deeper understanding of local thoughts and beliefs and the geographic and demographic boundaries of the problem in order to focus efforts. Community leaders can also provide a wealth of knowledge on both the local context of extremist beliefs and some of the factors that are

catalyzing or inhibiting these beliefs. A range of extremist beliefs may be present in one community, and it is important to understand the nuance of the local area before attempting to change extreme views and beliefs.

The second spectrum depicts behavior. Similar to McCauley and Moskaleiko's argument for multiple categories, Horgan argues that the violent actions of extremists are only "the tip of an iceberg of activity."¹⁶

There is very often migration both between and within roles, from illegal (e.g., engaging in violent activity) to gray areas (supporting the engagement in violent activity) to legal (e.g., peaceful protest, visiting relevant Websites to learn). While many of the activities that members of terrorist [extremist] movements engage in are not actually illegal per se (and cannot be meaningfully encompassed under the label terrorism, but instead subversion), without these activities, actual terrorist [violent extremist] operations could not develop, evolve, or be sustained over time and place. Engagement in violent activity is what we most commonly associate with terrorism [violent extremism].¹⁷

Expanding on Horgan's argument of a range of behaviors, four separate categories are proposed here: latent, activism, criminal, and violent. These terms demonstrate variation in both legal and illegal activities. The latent and activism behaviors encompass variation within the legal spectrum, and criminal and violent represent variations within the illegal spectrum.

The behavioral spectrum provides a framework from which to define the four identified behaviors. Latent behavior is characterized by inaction, due to the inability or unwillingness to take action. The inverse of latent behavior is activism. It is characterized by activities that encompass legal acts, such as protests, letter writing, chat room discussions, and donations of time, money, or goods. Activism can also cross into the illegal spectrum with acts of civil disobedience. Further along the illegal spectrum are criminal acts, such as arson, robbery, and abduction. Violent behaviors at the far end of the spectrum are criminal in nature; however, they specifically intend to harm or kill.

¹⁶ John Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618, no. 1 (2008): 80–94.

¹⁷ Ibid.

When ideas and behaviors are examined from the perspective of separate but intersecting continuums, it becomes clear that the majority of criminal and violent acts are not those motivated by extremist beliefs, but by normal beliefs. Equally important, many individuals who hold extreme views never conduct a criminal or violent act. This suggests that, while violent extremists are relatively rare, the entire extremist population is much larger; therefore countering extremism should address all of the separate extremist categories.

Psychologists McCauley and Moskaleiko, for example, suggest that the violent extremist category accounts for about 1% of all extremists.¹⁸ In their discussion about why there is such a sharp disparity between beliefs and actions, they make several claims. They argue “[t]here is no ‘conveyor belt’ from extreme beliefs to extreme actions,” that “fighting extreme ideas is a different problem than fighting terrorists,” and different agencies would be better suited to combating ideas and actions.¹⁹ Broadly, these observations imply that there is not a direct relationship between ideas and behaviors, but they are related in some way. Chapter III will discuss the relation of extreme ideas and action further, offering specific intervening variables to explain some of the disparity.

Figure 2 illustrates the concept of the behavioral spectrum for both normal and extreme ideational spectrums. The image separates the population of the United States into the two separate groups using a hypothetical rate of 15% extremism, indicating that the United States has 75,387,451 individuals that hold extreme views. This number includes extremist views of all types (jihadi, eco-extremist, white supremacist, etc.).

¹⁸ Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskaleiko, “Some Things We Think We’ve Learned since 9/11: A Commentary on Marc Sageman’s ‘the Stagnation in Terrorism Research,’” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 4 (2014): 604.

¹⁹ Ibid.

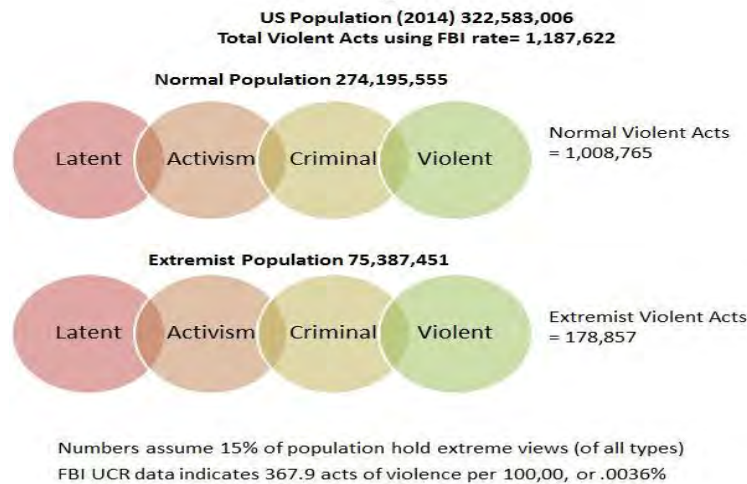


Figure 2. Frequency of Violent Extremism

Data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) uniform crime reports (UCR) indicate that there were 367.9 violent acts per 100,000 inhabitants in 2013.²⁰ This provides a total number of violent acts that can then be further divided into those committed by the “normal” and by extremist individuals. Using the FBI UCR rate and the total extremist population, the United States experienced 178,857 violent extremist acts in 2013. The global terrorism database indicates there were 15 terrorist (violent extremist) incidents in the United States during 2013.²¹ These two numbers are significantly different, indicating that either (1) incidents that were acts of violent extremism were miscategorized as normal violent acts, such as Nidal Hassan, or (2) the rate of extremist violent acts is incorrect. Both of these are likely to have contributed to the disparity in the reported numbers and the hypothetical numbers using the FBI rate.

²⁰ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniformed Crime Report: Crime in the United States 2013 Violent Crime* (Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice, 2013).

²¹ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), *Global Terrorism Database [Terrorist Attacks in the United States]* (College Park, MD: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2013).

D. BEYOND VIOLENCE

Violence is often associated with the definition of extremism,²² but the criminal acts performed in support of extremist beliefs and ideas are also important. Examining the activities of eco-terrorists, for example, illustrate that they often commit acts directed against property, such as arson, in order to inflict economic damage on their adversaries. Most eco-terrorists actively avoid harming human beings, which might exclude them from some definitions of violent extremism.

Investigative psychologists Canter and Youngs identify acts against person and property as two separate and distinct categories of crime using multi-dimensional scaling, and specifically, smallest space analysis, which is a non-metric mathematical technique that analyzes and compares the co-occurrence of attributes in relation to each other rather than as an absolute value.²³ This approach allows for patterns in the data to emerge and to create useful categorical distinctions to analyze acts. Given the empirical support of the person-property distinction in criminal literature, this thesis will use the term criminal extremist for those who commit acts against property, and violent extremist for those who use violence against people.

E. RADICALIZATION: THE PROCESS OF BECOMING MORE EXTREME

In an effort to understand how an individual or group arrives at the point at which they are willing to commit crimes or violent acts in support of their beliefs, some have developed theory and some have applied existing theories to the problem. While Chapter III will provide a much more detailed explanation on the leading theories, a brief explanation of each category will be provided here.

In an effort to explain radicalization, some researchers have built unique theories. In the process a debate has emerged on whether radicalization is a process with definitive stages or a series of mechanisms that are unstructured. Among the process oriented

²² Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism," 86; Moskaleiko and McCauley, "The Psychology of Lone-Wolf Terrorism," 115.

²³ David Canter and Donna Youngs, *Investigative Psychology: Offender Profiling and the Analysis of Criminal Action* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 101.

research are models, such as the New York Police Department (NYPD) model of radicalization,²⁴ the National Counter-Terrorism Center model,²⁵ and Moghaddam's staircase model.²⁶ Silber and Bhatt's NYPD model argues that radicalization occurs in four stages: (1) pre-radicalization, (2) self-identification, (3) indoctrination, and (4) jihadization.²⁷ The National Counter-Terrorism Center's model consists of three phases: (1) radicalization, (2) mobilization, and (3) action.²⁸ Moghaddam's staircase model posits that the journey is analogous to climbing a narrowing staircase that has five floors: (1) relative deprivation, (2) perceived injustice and individual mobility, (3) displacement of aggression, (4) engagement with a morality supportive of terrorism, (4) perceived legitimacy and solidification of categorical thinking, (5) vilification and distancing of the enemy particularly through myth.²⁹ These three explanations and their varying numbers of stages indicate that there is little agreement on the actual process of radicalization.

Opposing the process-centric models, McCauley and Moskalenko argue that radicalization happens through a variety of mechanisms that are interrelated but have no organizing structure.³⁰ They propose 12 mechanisms (Figure 3) that justify violence from the individual through the mass level.³¹

²⁴ Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* (New York: New York Police Department, 2007): 1–92.

²⁵ Karen D. Keys-Turner, "The Violent Islamic Radicalization Process: A Framework for Understanding" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2011).

²⁶ Fathali M. Moghaddam, "Psychological Processes and 'the Staircase to Terrorism,'" *American Psychologist* 60, no. 9 (2005): 1039–1041.

²⁷ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*.

²⁸ Keys-Turner, "The Violent Islamic Radicalization Process: A Framework for Understanding."

²⁹ Fathali M. Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration," *American Psychologist* 60, no. 2 (2005): 161–169.

³⁰ Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 3 (2008): 415–433.

³¹ Ibid.

McCauley and Moskaleiko's Pathways to Radicalization		
Level of radicalization		Mechanism
Individual	1. Personal victimization	
	2. Political grievance	
	3. Joining a radical group—the slippery slope	
	4. Joining a radical group—the power of love	
	5. Extremity shift in like-minded groups	
Group	6. Extreme cohesion under isolation and threat	
	7. Competition for the same base of support	
	8. Competition with state power—condensation	
	9. Within-group competition—fissioning	
Mass	10. Jujitsu politics	
	11. Hate	
	12. Martyrdom	

Figure 3. Pathways to Violence: Mechanisms of Political Radicalization at Individual, Group, and Mass-public Levels³²

In addition to these explicit attempts to build theory, several researchers have used existing theories to explain radicalization. One such example is the use of Social Identity Theory, which is described as a process of self-categorization that forms identity in groups.³³ Security studies researcher Dina Al Raffie uses Social Identity Theory to argue that the more pervasive an identity is within an environment, the more conducive the environment is to extremism.³⁴ Specifically, her work focuses on the presence of Islamist ideology in the diaspora and the interaction between normal and extreme ideas, arguing the more pervasive the Islamist view is in the community, the higher the level of support for both non-violent and violent action. Terrorism expert Marc Sageman also uses a combination of social network analysis and what he calls “moral outrage” to explain the process of radicalization.³⁵ By moral outrage Sageman means “a reaction to perceived major moral violations, like killings, rapes, or local police actions.”³⁶ He believes that individuals come together in small groups bound by friendship and kinship over a shared reaction to this moral outrage that is shaped by a particular world view.

³² McCauley and Moskaleiko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism,” 418.

³³ Peter James Burke, *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 111–36.

³⁴ Dina Al Raffie, “Social Identity Theory for Investigating Islamic Extremism in the Diaspora,” *Journal of Strategic Security* 6, no. 4 (2013): 67–91.

³⁵ Marc Sageman, “A Strategy for Fighting International Islamist Terrorists,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618, no. 1 (2008): 223–231.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 225.

Given the above discussion, the following terms will be used to investigate extremism as a wide phenomenon.

- Radicalization: The Process of Becoming More Extreme by Departing from Socially Accepted Ideas/Beliefs

This definition draws from McCauley and Moskalkenko, who define radicalization as the “change in beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of the in-group.”³⁷ However, McCauley and Moskalkenko’s definition focuses specifically on a narrow behavioral output: violence. In subsequent definitions, this thesis will expand the range of behavioral outputs associated with extreme beliefs. This distinction is important because it provides a wider range of options to counter extremism. Chapter III will expand upon this process in greater detail.

- Normal: An Individual Who Holds Beliefs or Views within the Current Range of Cultural or Societal Norms and Values

This definition draws from social psychologist Marie Jahoda, who argues that the concept of normal varies “with the time, place, culture, and expectations of the social group.”³⁸ This definition, therefore, is rooted within socially accepted norms and values, with the understanding that those norms and values will change over time. Furthermore, this definition also acknowledges that sub-groups have their own definition of normal; in other words, each sub-group will have normal and extreme views.

- Extremist: An Individual Who Holds Beliefs or Views Vastly Different from the Current Cultural or Societal Norms and Values

As previously discussed, Horgan argues that a broad spectrum of extremists exists, and that extremists perform various roles and functions based on their beliefs and capabilities.³⁹ He further contends that within the spectrum of extremism there is a migration from legal to illegal activities, and the illegal and violent acts perpetrated by an

³⁷ McCauley and Moskalkenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism,” 416.

³⁸ Marie Jahoda, *Current Concepts of Positive Mental Health* (New York: Basic Books, 1958), <http://psycnet.apa.org/books/11258/>.

³⁹ Horgan, “From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism.”

extremist movement “could not be developed, evolved or sustained over time and place” without the support of those who support and operate in the legal and gray areas.⁴⁰ As such, the common underlying attribute of extremists is their beliefs, which are outside of societal held norms and values.

- Latent Extremist: An Individual Who Holds or Supports Extremist Beliefs, but Is Unable or Unwilling to Take Action

As Horgan identifies, many of the members of extremist movements do not participate in illegal activities, but still hold the same beliefs, active or dormant, as those who carry out illegal acts.⁴¹ McCauley and Moskalkenko echo this claim with their inclusion of the inert category.⁴² This category is comprised of extremists who are only a grievance away from moving further down the radicalization process. Mao’s treatise *On Guerrilla Warfare* describes this category as “the mass base,” which supports an ideology, but is operationally dormant. For the mass base to become active, it needs to identify with a grievance in order to voluntarily take on an active, operational role in defense of the ideology.⁴³

- Activist Extremist: An Individual Who Commits Ideologically Motivated Activism in Support of Their Extremist Beliefs and Values

This definition draws on literature on radicalization that argues that activism is a stage in the radicalization process; however, there has been little effort to disaggregate normal activism from extremist activism in a clear and concise definition. McCauley and Moskalkenko define activists as those “who are engaged in legal political action for a cause.”⁴⁴ However, this definition does not separate socially normal activism, such as civil disobedience in support of human rights, from extremist activism, such as propagating literature in support of extremist violence or behavior. Thus, the proposed

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² McCauley and Moskalkenko, “Some Things We Think We’ve Learned since 9/11: A Commentary on Marc Sageman’s “the Stagnation in Terrorism Research.””

⁴³ Tse-tung Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare* (JVB Books, 1961), 72–73.

⁴⁴ McCauley and Moskalkenko, “Some Things We Think We’ve Learned since 9/11: A Commentary on Marc Sageman’s “the Stagnation in Terrorism Research,”” 602.

term “Activist Extremist” is beneficial in that it clearly delineates the normal and extremist ideas from the activist’s behavior.

- Criminal Extremist: An individual Who Commits Ideologically Motivated Criminal Acts without the Intent to Inflict Human Harm or Death in Support of Their Extremist Beliefs and Values

In their book, *Investigative Psychology*, Canter and Youngs argue that there is a distinction between crimes against persons and those against property.⁴⁵ They show that criminals tend to commit more than one crime and that their crimes tend to be related. We expand this distinction to denote the existence of criminal extremists (property) and violent extremists (person).

- Violent Extremist: An Individual Who Commits Ideologically Motivated Violence with the Intent to Inflict Human Harm or Death in Support of Their Extremist Beliefs and Values⁴⁶

Building off of Canter and Youngs, this definition differentiates the intended output of violence from other less lethal acts, such as property crimes. Further, sociologist Christian Smith argues that religions provide moral directive for behavior.⁴⁷ Thus, based on Smith’s proposition, ideology provides a moral framework to create the conditions for the individual or group to morally accept violence as a justified action in response to their grievances.

F. THE INTERSECTION OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

In addition to defining extremism, it is also important to examine the role that unit of analysis plays in understanding extremism. The NYPD model is one of many theories that posit that radicalization occurs at the individual level.⁴⁸ Other individual theories have been used to explain radicalization. For example, rational choice theory posits that individuals make decisions based on the examination of risk and rewards, or cost and

⁴⁵ Canter and Youngs, *Investigative Psychology: Offender Profiling and the Analysis of Criminal Action*.

⁴⁶ White House, *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*, 1.

⁴⁷ Christian Smith and Michael Emerson, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

⁴⁸ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*.

benefits.⁴⁹ For the researcher using rational choice to explain extremism, the individual calculates that the benefits exceed the costs, even the ultimate cost of life. Another theory that focuses on radicalization at the individual level is identity theory, which posits that each individual has a host of sub-identities that form into pyramids of prominence (importance) and salience (situationally activated); these two variables provide insight into the development of the extremist identity.⁵⁰ Identity theory provides another useful foundation for understanding individual identity as part of the radicalization process.

Another theory that explains extremism at the individual level is social network theory, which examines the ties between individuals. This theory argues that ties between individuals have a greater impact on behavior than individual attributes do.⁵¹ Social network analysis provides a wealth of data on ties between individuals and their role in the radicalization process.

Theories also exist that posit extremism occurs at the group level. One such theory, proposed by Al Raffie, is rooted in social identity.⁵² Social identity theory proposes a process of self-categorization that forms identity in groups.⁵³ Social identity theory differs from identity theory in that it provides the social level, not the individual level, as the center of causality. Social identity theory is useful for studying radicalization because of its focus on in-group favoritism and intergroup conflict. In-group favoritism refers to the process of favorably comparing an individual in a perceived group higher than an individual that is outside the perceived group.⁵⁴ Intergroup conflict is the result of competition over resources in a finite space, which benefits one group over another.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Burke, *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories*, 70–87.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 88–110.

⁵¹ Sean F. Everton, *Disrupting Dark Networks* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁵² Al Raffie, “Social Identity Theory for Investigating Islamic Extremism in the Diaspora.”

⁵³ Burke, *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories*, 111–36.

⁵⁴ Henri Tajfel, “Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 33 (1982): 1–39.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Finally, sub-cultural identity theory argues that all people search for meaning and belonging, which is often found in groups.⁵⁶ Though sub-cultural identity theory originally was developed to explain the strength of modern religious institutions, it provides a wider perspective on a fundamental human principle, the drive for meaning in life.

G. CONCLUSION

No single theory provides a clear answer to the radicalization process. The number of theories in each of these schools of thought suggests that both the individual and group levels are important for explaining what causes extremism. Furthermore, new theories should attempt to understand the interaction between the individual and social level.

In the next chapter, a more thorough explanation will be provided on the dynamics of the interaction of the individual and his or her social ties. The focus of this work will attempt to bridge the two classical schools of thought and examine the individual(s) within the social landscape in which they exist. Analyzing the interplay of individual identity and social ties provides a deeper understanding than an analysis of either could provide alone.

⁵⁶ Smith and Emerson, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*.

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III. MODELS OF RADICALIZATION

The process of radicalization has become important to more than just policy makers, law enforcement officials and academics. Communities across the United States have taken steps to reduce the risk of a terrorist attack in their community. However, despite these efforts the process of radicalization is still shrouded in mystery, as is the role that radicalization plays in perpetrating terrorist acts. If a more thorough understanding of the process of radicalization can be achieved, the multitude of stakeholders will be significantly more capable of addressing this important social and security issue.

In this chapter, we will provide insight into radicalization by reviewing some of the prominent explanations for the process leading to extremism. We then will propose a new framework for understanding radicalization. The first section will offer an examination of current theories and frameworks that have been used to describe the radicalization process.⁵⁷ The second section will present a new radicalization framework that builds upon existing radicalization literature. Ultimately, this chapter will provide stakeholders with a framework that investigates the dynamic interaction of identity, social environment, grievances, and other catalytic factors that influence an individual in the radicalization process. It will further provide stakeholders with a common language that may be used to discuss the potential degree of risk individuals may pose, depending upon their progression in the radicalization process. The aim is to identify more effective intervention programs to facilitate individual departure from the radicalization process.

⁵⁷ Some of the existing models of radicalization and theories include Identity Theory, Social Identity Theory, Identity Control Theory, National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) Radicalization Framework, the NYPD (New York Police Department) Model, McCauley and Moskaleiko's Pathways Framework, Moghaddam's Staircase Framework, and McCall and Simmons Prominence and Salience Pyramids.

A. NCTC

In 2011, the U.S. National Counter-Terrorism Center developed a radicalization model.⁵⁸ This model is comprised of three stages: radicalization, mobilization and action shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4. NCTC Radicalization Framework⁵⁹

As the model shows there are a number of factors that lead to radicalization, but only the large groupings, such as personal factors, are labeled. Furthermore, the model provides the idea that some factors act as a catalyst for the radicalization process and some act as an inhibitor. These factors are not identified, but this concept is important in the creation of a more sophisticated explanation of radicalization. However, the model does not provide a clear definition of who is an extremist and who is not, nor does it provide detail about how or when an individual moves from one stage to the next.

One strong point of the model is the universal nature of the labels. This model can be applied across racial, religious and national boundaries. The assumption inherent in this model is that the psychosocial process of radicalization is not unique to any one

⁵⁸ Keys-Turner, "The Violent Islamic Radicalization Process: A Framework for Understanding"; The citation provided is a broken link but the information on the model was publicly available at the time.

⁵⁹ Keys-Turner, "The Violent Islamic Radicalization Process: A Framework for Understanding."

group, but is the result of a combination of factors that coalesce over time under the necessary and sufficient conditions. The model also seeks to identify the drivers at each stage and acknowledges the fact that some factors can act in an inhibitive manner, retarding the process.

B. MCCAULEY AND MOSKALENKO'S PATHWAYS

Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko argue that radicalization is not a process, but occurs on a multitude of specific pathways or mechanisms.⁶⁰ Furthermore, they argue that radicalization cannot be explained by one overarching theory, but constructing a loose framework may be possible.⁶¹ Specifically, they envision two pyramids, ideas and actions, which are related. They suggest pathways that range from individual through group to mass levels. Each mechanism is explained with plausible scenarios involving individual causes, such as personal victimization. The pathway argument, however, does not identify why some people experience personal grievances and yet do not conduct an attack. Figure 5 shows the 12 mechanisms proposed by McCauley and Moskalenko.

McCauley and Moskalenko's Pathways to Radicalization		
Level of radicalization		Mechanism
Individual	1.	Personal victimization
	2.	Political grievance
	3.	Joining a radical group—the slippery slope
	4.	Joining a radical group—the power of love
	5.	Extremity shift in like-minded groups
Group	6.	Extreme cohesion under isolation and threat
	7.	Competition for the same base of support
	8.	Competition with state power—condensation
	9.	Within-group competition—fissioning
Mass	10.	Jujitsu politics
	11.	Hate
	12.	Martyrdom

Figure 5. Pathways to Violence: Mechanisms of Political Radicalization at Individual, Group, and Mass-public Levels⁶²

⁶⁰ McCauley and Moskalenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism.”

⁶¹ Ibid., 429.

⁶² Ibid., 418.

C. AL RAFFIE'S EXPLANATION

Dina Al Raffie examines social identity theory as a cause of radicalization.⁶³ Specifically, Al Raffie examines the role of identity in the formation of intragroup liking and intergroup competition. In a departure from other studies, she also examines the role of non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) influence on communities in the promotion of extremist ideology, in this case militant Islam. While some NGOs exert a positive influence in diaspora communities to promote pluralism and help immigrants integrate into society, other NGOs may be fueling extremist ideologies and acting as radicalizing agents in the community.⁶⁴

Al Raffie also points out that the human ego and self-esteem are powerful drivers of human behavior and shed light on this process.⁶⁵ In some diaspora populations, real and perceived discrimination drives individuals to reinforce shared values, in this case Islamic values. As individuals navigate the process to reconcile conflicting identities, such as national identity and religious identity, the identity that strengthens self-esteem may be favored over the other.⁶⁶

While Al Raffie clearly articulates that social identity theory may not explain all paths to radicalization, the role of identity is extremely prominent in some cases.⁶⁷ The role of the peer and social system emerges as a strong indicator in the social identity theory explanation for radicalization. Finally, both the role of the individual commitment to the group and the group's identity also must be considered in the shaping of radical beliefs.

⁶³ Al Raffie, "Social Identity Theory for Investigating Islamic Extremism in the Diaspora."

⁶⁴ Al Raffie, "Social Identity Theory for Investigating Islamic Extremism in the Diaspora," 90.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 77.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 83–84.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 89.

D. NYPD MODEL OF RADICALIZATION

The NYPD developed a process centric radicalization model in 2007.⁶⁸ The NYPD model articulates a four stage process that an individual passes through in the radicalization process: pre-radicalization, self-identification, indoctrination, and jihadization.⁶⁹ The model argues that each of the phases is unique and that individuals who progress through the process do not necessarily pass through all the stages linearly, but may in fact skip phases, stall out, or disengage at any given point. However, the end result of an individual who progress through all four stages of the process is a violent extremist.⁷⁰ Despite discussion of the stages of radicalization, the model does not provide any descriptive linkages to account for how or why some individuals do not follow the linear progression. Furthermore, they do not link stages to conditions that explain the causes for progression from one stage to another (i.e., lack of conflict resolution mechanism).

The NYPD model, depicted in Figure 6, shows the process of radicalization based on NYPD's Senior Intelligence Analysts Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt's work on nine case studies, including the Hamburg cell that conducted the 9/11 attacks.

⁶⁸ The NYPD model was designed specifically in an effort to understand the domestic radicalization process of Islamic inspired violent extremism.

⁶⁹ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*.

⁷⁰ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 21.

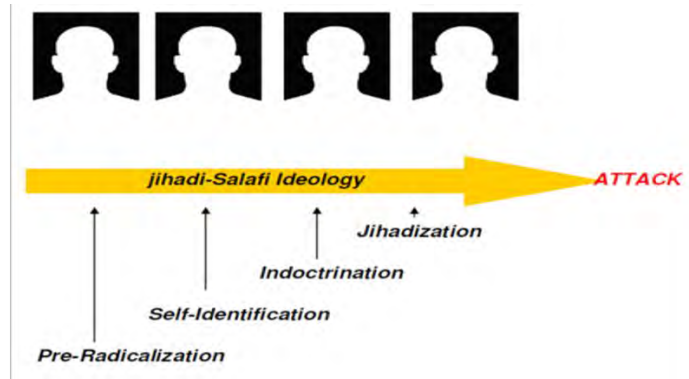


Figure 6. NYPD Model of Radicalization⁷¹

In this process, the individual begins at a point before being exposed to any kind of change that would initiate a journey through the radicalization process, the pre-radicalization stage. Next, Silber and Bhatt argue that the individual is exposed to radical ideology and he or she begins to self-identify with the cause of the movement.⁷² The authors see a “cognitive opening” that challenges previously held beliefs, opening the door for the movement’s ideology.⁷³ The third stage is indoctrination, whereby the individual strengthens his or her beliefs in the ideology.⁷⁴ Fourth, the individual moves into the final stage, “jihadization” whereby the individual accepts a duty to conduct attacks in support of the cause. Terrorist attacks are likely to follow the completion of the process and can occur quickly. Although the model is Islam-centric, it in no way makes any value judgment on Islam or assumes that radicalization is solely an Islamic problem.

The authors of the model note that many individuals who begin this process do not complete it. Furthermore, the length of time that an individual spends in each stage can vary. However, the authors also note that the majority of the cases examined follow remarkably similar trajectories indicating the behavioral consistency of the process.⁷⁵ The process is also usually sparked by a search for an identity that allows for the individual to

⁷¹ Ibid., 21

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 6–7.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 24.

go astray and eventually join the movement. Silber and Bhatt further argue that no profile exists to explain why individuals may be turning toward terrorism.⁷⁶ However, the cases the NYPD examined as part of this study highlighted the role that political grievances played in newly radicalized individuals and for violent action.⁷⁷

A key concept identified is the role of influential figures or common locations in the process of radicalization, which Silber and Bhatt call “radicalization incubators.”⁷⁸ These people or places produce high numbers of extremists. Individuals often begin the radicalization process alone, but then interact with like-minded individuals as part of the process that reinforces their path toward radicalization. The Internet is also cited as a special source of concern for radicalization, where individuals can complete large portions of the radicalization process without any local connection. For this reason, they refer to the Internet as the “virtual incubator.”⁷⁹

One limit in the model is the lack of specificity on when an individual is in one stage as opposed to the other, or more importantly, what causes an individual to move from one stage to the other. Clear distinctions between phases will be helpful for law enforcement officers, policy makers and community leaders who are not as familiar with the literature on radicalization, but still want/need to help fight radicalization in their jurisdiction.

Another limit of the model is that Silber and Bhatt posit that individuals will exhibit specific traits or attributes at each stage of the process, but do not provide clear evidence of the traits. Further research should attempt to identify the specific attributes with the ultimate goal of developing strategies to intervene early in the process. Furthermore, and perhaps most important for this thesis, the NYPD model does not account for participation in activism, does not discuss the impact of the social environment on the process of radicalization sufficiently, and does not discuss the

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 84.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁹ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 22.

formation of the extremist identity in detail. These important issues need to be addressed in order to interdict individual's escalation towards radicalization.

E. BUILDING ON EXISTING THEORIES AND MODELS

Several theories contribute to the model proposed below. The theory that provides a foundation for the CITIG framework is social network analysis (SNA). The basic premise of social network analysis is that individuals, called actors, have ties to other individuals who influence their behavior.⁸⁰ "A social network is a finite set or sets of actors that [sic] share ties with one another."⁸¹ Ties are categorized as strong and weak along a continuum. A "SNA assumption is that ties (i.e., relations) between actors can function as conduits for the diffusion of various types of material and nonmaterial "goods," such as information, feelings, financial resources, norms, diseases, opinions, and trust."⁸² Strong ties are connections to individuals who are close to the actor and repeatedly engage with the actor. Weak ties are not as close, but allow for the individual to cross boundaries and connect to different groups. In general, strong ties reinforce beliefs, and weak ties diffuse new ideas and connect people to new groups.

Networks can also be dense, with a lot of close ties, or sparse, with relatively few ties. "Network density is positively related to the likelihood that actors within the network will follow accepted norms and behavior, which is why a primary basis for moral order is highly connected in social networks."⁸³ One reason that sociologist Sean Everton provides for the influence of ties on individuals is that "SNA assumes that actors do not make decisions as autonomous units but instead are strongly influenced by the behavior and choices of other actors."⁸⁴ Overall SNA provides insight into the structure and patterns of social engagement that occur throughout the radicalization process.

⁸⁰ Everton, *Disrupting Dark Networks*.

⁸¹ Ibid., 9.

⁸² Everton, *Disrupting Dark Networks*, 18.

⁸³ Ibid., 10.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 15.

Social identity theory is also a useful theory for a model of radicalization. Sociologist Henri Tajfel argues that social identity theory is a process of self-categorization whereby an individual finds a sense of belonging in specific groups within the greater social structure by dividing the world into in-groups (us) and out-groups (them) in order to enhance his or her own self-image.⁸⁵ This process is completed through a system of social categorization, social identification, and social comparison where an individual stereotypes, based on normal cognitive processes, through exaggerating the differences between groups and the similarities of things in the same group to create a paradigm of us versus them.

In the social categorization stage, an individual categorizes others into broad groups in order to understand and identify them. From this process, individuals are able to define appropriate behaviors, based on the norms and values of the categorized groups, in order to integrate or exclude themselves from specific groups. In the social identification stage, an individual will adopt the identity of the group they have categorized themselves into, resulting in their emotional integration into the group with their self-esteem bound up within the group membership and said group's favorable comparison with other groups. This step leads to the social comparison stage where, in order to maintain the collective self-esteem of group members, intergroup comparison occurs, which perpetuates competition and hostility. If competition leads to a favorable comparison of a group, the self-esteem of the individuals within the group will increase. However, if the group comparison suffers, then the self-esteem of the collective individuals will also decrease. This process requires groups to continually seek favorable position over other groups within the social space.⁸⁶

Of equal importance, identity theory articulates the process of identification. Identity theory posits that an individual has multiple identities that exist simultaneously and they can be classified as person based, role based, or group based identities.⁸⁷ For

⁸⁵ Burke, *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories*, 111–36.

⁸⁶ Henri Tajfel, ed., *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Waltham, MA: Academic Press, 1978).

⁸⁷ Jan Stets, "Identity Theory," in *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories*, ed. Peter J Burke (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 89–90.

each identity, the individual has a set of meanings⁸⁸ that are important when an identity is activated. Within this process, two terms are necessary: prominence and salience. Prominence is how important a sub-identity is to the individual within the context of the multiple identities that make up the whole of the individual.⁸⁹ Salience is the activation of a sub-identity selected from the prominence hierarchy based on an individual's current situational context.⁹⁰

McCall and Simmons propose a hierarchy of prominence and salience separately (Figure 7).⁹¹ The hierarchy is a useful conceptualization in this instance because it is clear that certain identities will take priority over others. Which identity takes precedence is a matter of context, but identities that are more prominent (at the top of the pyramid) will guide the actions of other identities. Furthermore, prominence impacts salience.⁹² Salience will shift based on a given context, but the prominence pyramid is relatively stable and does not change quickly, unless a severe event, such as joining a religious cult or being held captive in a prisoner of war camp, necessitates a change.⁹³ Burke illuminates that a significant shift in ties creates the conditions where a change in identity will occur. These contexts occur in numerous macro and micro social environments and can be the result of the loss of strong familial ties (clans or tribes), emigration or as a result of the effects of war.

⁸⁸ The concept of a "set of meanings" that comprise an identity will be described in depth later in this chapter.

⁸⁹ Philip S. Brenner, Richard T. Serpe, and Sheldon Stryker, "The Causal Ordering of Prominence and Salience in Identity Theory an Empirical Examination," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (2014): 231–252.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Stets, "Identity Theory," 91–92.

⁹² Brenner, Serpe, and Stryker, "The Causal Ordering of Prominence and Salience in Identity Theory an Empirical Examination."

⁹³ Peter J. Burke, "Identity Change," 69, no. 1 *Social Psychology Quarterly* (2006): 84.

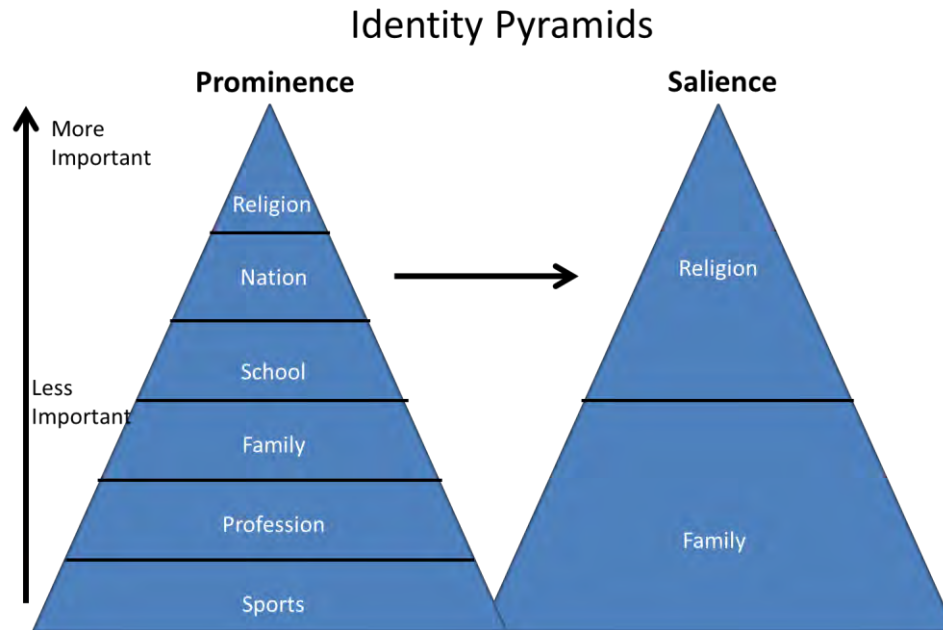


Figure 7. Prominence and Salience Pyramids⁹⁴

In identity control theory (ICT), a separate yet related theory, Burke posits a mechanism of control for the multiple identities using a hierarchical perceptual control system.⁹⁵ “Within, ICT, an identity is viewed as a set of self-relevant meanings held as standards for the identity in question.”⁹⁶ The set of meanings that define each identity is known as the identity standard. When an identity is activated, the set of meanings is used as a guide to measure behavior against; when a behavior matches the standard, the identity is verified through a calculation called identity verification.⁹⁷ If the identity standard is not verified, it produces an error, which in turn creates dissonance and provides the motivation for change.⁹⁸ Once the error has been reduced, the drive for change goes away, restoring balance to the control system. The error produces both

⁹⁴ Visualization of McCall and Simmon’s pyramids in Stets, “Identity Theory,” 91–92.

⁹⁵ Burke, “Identity Change,” 81.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 83.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

cognitive and emotional reactions, positive feelings for verification and distress for errors.⁹⁹

This process of validation occurs in each identity. If multiple identities are activated at the same time, as in a situation where a child is in the presence of both parents and friends, the potential for contradiction in identity standards occurs as certain aspects of the child's behavior associated with the "friend" identity produces a clash or error with the "child" identity associated with the parents. In this case, if two identities are opposing, the individual can choose to deactivate one identity, renegotiate the discrepancy between the two standards, or enact the standard of the identity with a higher salience.¹⁰⁰ It is in this case when the child is in the presence of his or her parents that the "child" identity is activated while the "friend" identity is deactivated to produce behaviors that are acceptable to the parents due to the stronger ties the child has with the parents within this or her person based identity over the weaker ties in the group based identity. In testing the change of multiple identities over time, Burke shows that person based identities act as a higher control system with role and group based identities operating as subordinate identities.¹⁰¹ In this case, role or group identities will not control behavior as strongly as person based identities. Over time role and group identities can cause changes to the identity standard of person based identities. The strength of commitment to the identity and the number of ties based on the identity are determining factors in which identities are strengthened over time and which are weakened.¹⁰² Burke argues "[b]ecause high salience and strong commitment characterize the person identity, I also suggest that it may operate like a master identity and that it may be higher in the control hierarchy than social or role identities."¹⁰³ The concept of a master identity that has direct effects on other social and role identities is crucial in the understanding of the

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 86.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 83.

¹⁰² Burke, "Identity Change," 85.

¹⁰³ Peter J. Burke, "Identities and Social Structure: The 2003 Cooley-Mead Award Address," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2004): 10.

radicalization process. An extremist identity that controls all behavior and has the power to deactivate conflicting identities provides a powerful explanation for radicalization.

Building upon the foundation of the NYPD, this thesis proposes a new framework consisting of four stages (Figure 8). Stage One begins with a personal crisis that is exacerbated by antecedent conditions, such as a lack of strong social ties that typically provide an individual with support networks and grounding within their existing identity and social structure. In a search to resolve the crisis, an individual will make new ties or find new ideologies, which will result in the formation of a new identity that will continue to evolve throughout the radicalization process. Stage Two consists of the reframing of the personal crisis that links the evolving identity to a grievance through indoctrination that may precede or follow contact with extremists. An individual will progress from Stage Two to Stage Three when they take action associated with the extremist identity to gain acceptance and approval (identity verification) of the in-group. In Stage Three the individual begins activism on behalf of the perceived grievances of the new extremist identity. The lack of a resolution mechanism is the catalyst for the individual in Stage Four where the extremist begins operational planning to execute a specific action, criminal or violent, with which to force a resolution to their grievance.

CITIG Radicalization Framework

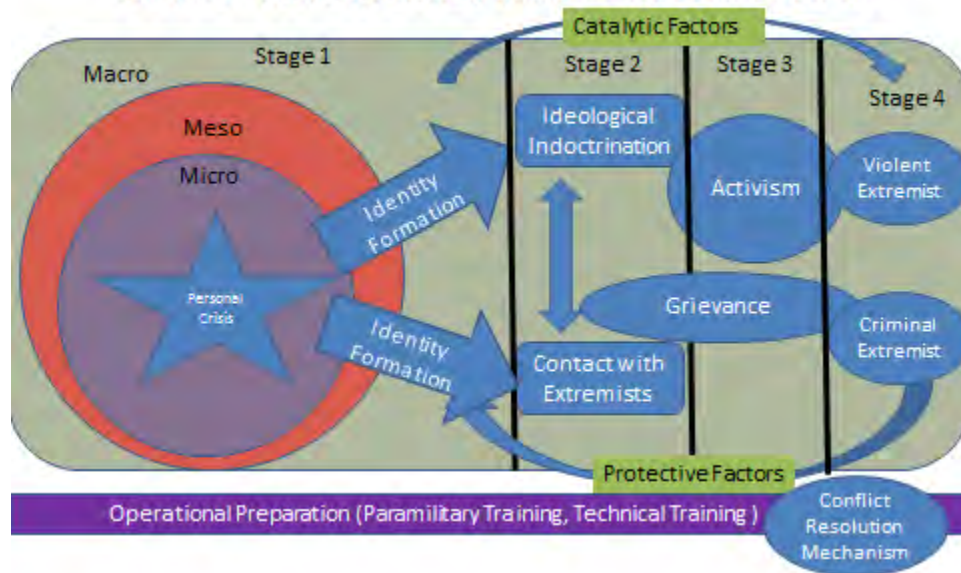


Figure 8. CITIG Radicalization Framework

1. Stage 1: Personal Crisis

This framework posits that the process begins with a personal crisis that is compounded by antecedent conditions, and this crisis affects an individual's personal and/or social identity.

Burke argues that identity change from crises can be both endogenous and exogenous.¹⁰⁴ He names two endogenous sources of change: the lack of identity verification and innovation within current identities.¹⁰⁵ He further identifies three exogenous sources of change: a change in resource flows through a social structure, a change in size of the social structure, and the redefinition of role identities by a higher authority.¹⁰⁶ McCauley and Moskaleiko's twelve mechanisms for radicalization offer an extensive list of the personal crises that might spark the process of radicalization, from the individual through the mass level.¹⁰⁷ The presence of both individual and group crises

¹⁰⁴ Burke, "Identities and Social Structure: The 2003 Cooley-Mead Award Address," 13.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ McCauley and Moskaleiko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism."

indicates that both individual and collective identities can be present in the radicalization process. Moghaddam generalizes that Islamic communities around the world are experiencing an identity crisis.¹⁰⁸

A number of antecedent conditions can also exasperate the crisis. One factor is the lack of both strong and weak ties that provide social support to resolve the crisis. As a result of the lack of ties, the individual attempts to search for resolution to their crisis within new ties that lead them to extremist ideologies. Another aggravating factor is low status; Burke argues that individuals with low status are more likely to change their identity because they are not able to verify their identity and provide meaning in their life.¹⁰⁹ Sageman also argues that a search for “glory and thrills” is one of the main drivers of radicalization,¹¹⁰ indicating that identity verification is an important part of the process.

Silber and Bhatt argue that the individual drifts away from their old identity in search of a new one.¹¹¹ The result is the formation of a new identity that will continue to evolve as new ties are formed within their personal network and as the individual is further indoctrinated within the extremist ideology. Combined, the evolving identity, the new ties and indoctrination reinforce the individual’s sense of identity within a group and its greater social structure.

The process of identity formation under specific circumstances is useful for understanding the path to radicalization. Radicalized identities are separate and distinct from their larger communities (Jihadis within the Muslim ummah, or eco-extremists within environmentalism) because they have a unique ideology, established norms, taboos and practices.

Furthermore, the variance in when radicalization occurs can be explained, in part, by specific types of identity formation. Radicalization is a difficult concept to study in

¹⁰⁸ Moghaddam, “Psychological Processes and ‘the Staircase to Terrorism,’” 1040.

¹⁰⁹ Burke, “Identities and Social Structure: The 2003 Cooley-Mead Award Address,” 12.

¹¹⁰ Sageman, “A Strategy for Fighting International Islamist Terrorists,” 226.

¹¹¹ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 228.

part because it occurs at many different points in an individual's life and in many different places. Literature has identified prison radicalization,¹¹² Internet radicalization,¹¹³ radicalization on college campuses,¹¹⁴ radicalization among diaspora populations,¹¹⁵ radicalization among overseas workers,¹¹⁶ and radicalization of individuals ranging from childhood to very late in life. Environments like prison and university campuses are places that require individuals to adapt and often form new identities as a result of new relationships.

2. Stage 2: New Identity

During Stage Two, a few separate yet interconnected actions take place: the individual makes contact with other extremists, becomes indoctrinated into the ideology of the identity and connects to the grievances associated with the identity. These steps may not occur in the same sequence for each individual. One individual may make contact with an extremist that directs him to more ideological indoctrination, or an individual may self-indoctrinate through various forms of media and then seek contact with other extremists.

In reality, it is difficult to pull apart the interactive nature of ideas and personal ties. Silber and Bhatt discuss the interactive nature of the search for meaning in the new identity:

Most often the vehicles for these exposures include family ties or old friendships, social networks, religious movements like the Tablighi Jamaat, political movements like the Muslim Brotherhood, or extremist-like discussions in halal butcher shops, cafes, gyms, student associations, study groups, non-governmental organizations and, most importantly, the Internet.¹¹⁷

¹¹² James Brandon, "Unlocking Al-Qaeda: Islamist Extremism in British Prisons," *Quilliam Foundation*, 2009.

¹¹³ Sageman, "A Strategy for Fighting International Islamist Terrorists."

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 227.

¹¹⁵ Al Raffie, "Social Identity Theory for Investigating Islamic Extremism in the Diaspora."

¹¹⁶ Mark Vinson, "Radicalization of Migrant Workers in Russia Could Threaten Stability in Tajikistan," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, August 7, 2013.

¹¹⁷ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 32.

Contact with extremists is a crucial part of Stage Two. Social network analysis offers a useful framework for understanding the role that contact with other extremists plays in radicalization. Silber and Bhatt find that individuals usually start the radicalization process alone and then seek contact with like-minded individuals.¹¹⁸

Sageman argues that radicalization occurs through ties of friendship and kinship, which would be classified as strong ties, in his “bunch of guys” explanation for the wave of contemporary attacks in the United States.¹¹⁹ Silber, Bhatt, and Sageman all assert that individual clusters tend to act through inspiration, rather than through direct command and control,¹²⁰ indicating that ties play an important role throughout the radicalization process. The beliefs and values of the people in the “ego network”¹²¹ have great impact on the beliefs and values of the individual. This approach expands the understanding of the phenomenon from a strictly psychological perspective to a larger psychosocial lens.

As the individual strengthens the new identity, weak ties to extremists will be made. The individual chooses whether or not to associate with these extremists and chooses whether to maintain the current contacts in the ego network. As the radicalization process continues, more contact with extremists will cause the severing of strong ties that restrain extremist beliefs and actions, thereby causing the migration of the actor from the periphery of their previous network into that of the extremist network.

Identities compete with each other for salience in a given situation, which overall affects prominence.¹²² McCauley and Moskaleiko argue that groups or individuals who are socially isolated can progress through the radicalization process faster because of the lack of prosocial influences.¹²³ The number of ties and the strength of the ties associated

¹¹⁸ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 9.

¹¹⁹ Sageman, “A Strategy for Fighting International Islamist Terrorists,” 224.

¹²⁰ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 7; Sageman, “A Strategy for Fighting International Islamist Terrorists,” 224.

¹²¹ Ego network is a term that is used in social network theory to describe the ties that are associated to one individual. The individual is the ego and the individuals tied to the ego are called alters.

¹²² Brenner, Serpe, and Stryker, “The Causal Ordering of Prominence and Salience in Identity Theory an Empirical Examination.”

¹²³ McCauley and Moskaleiko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism,” 423.

with an identity provide a way to evaluate which identity will have a stronger influence on behavior. Everton argues that ties influence behavior through a fear of losing the ties and the value that they provide.¹²⁴ When the extremist identity is in competition with the existing identities, the number and strength of ties will help explain which identity is activated.

To understand the dynamics of identity change, Burke examines the changes of multiple identities over time. He tests the effects that the birth of a child has on the female gender identity and spousal role identity over time.¹²⁵ He finds that the exogenous crisis (birth of a child) causes changes to both the gender and role identities, but that the changes in gender identity had effects on the spouse role identity, indicating an interaction in identities.¹²⁶ The change occurs on points of similarity between multiple identities, such as the degree of femininity/masculinity of the gender identity and the spousal identity.

Through the same process, when an individual assumes an identity, such as a white supremacist or jihadi, cognitive dissonance occurs because of the contradiction of the new identity and old ones. The beliefs of the previous identities are called into question and often must be changed through cognitive restructuring. It can be difficult to reconcile an existing belief of equality with the intolerance and exclusivity of the white supremacy ideology. Burke suggests that individuals manage this dissonance by selective interaction, choosing whom to associate with to reduce dissonance.¹²⁷ As individuals progress through the stages of the model and disengage from prosocial peers, identities that are not directly supporting the new identity may be purged from the salience pyramid. With fewer identities competing in the salience pyramid, the new identity will be activated more frequently.

Weak ties are also extremely important in the radicalization process. Granovetter argues that weak ties can have profound impact on the individual, opening new

¹²⁴ Everton, *Disrupting Dark Networks*, 10.

¹²⁵ Burke, "Identity Change."

¹²⁶ Ibid., 92.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 94.

opportunities in the social space.¹²⁸ A weak tie with an extremist may begin the indoctrination into the ideology or provide new frames that alter the ideology. In the context of actions, weak ties can also provide operational assistance, such as bomb-making skills, intelligence on a target, or operational security practices. Sageman further articulates this process by describing how individuals, or nodes, come in contact with hubs, which are nodes with many links or weak ties. These hubs function as facilitators that provide other nodes, or individuals, with ties to further indoctrination, material, or resources.¹²⁹ He further argues:

Weak ties to a clique can be a bridge to jihad. In many social processes such as getting a job, learning about new information and spreading fads or rumors, weak ties are more important than strong friends. In a world of cliques, strong friends lump together into separate groups. So far, there is no connection between them and they are in danger of social implosion, totally disconnected from the rest of the world. What keeps these cliques connected to each other are weak ties, linking certain members of one clique to another. These ties are not strong enough to include the outside individuals in the clique. But they play a crucial role in bridging the clique to the rest of the world...weak ties play this crucial role in bringing enthusiastic new candidates to the jihad. This is a self-generating process from below rather than a recruitment drive from above.¹³⁰

Based on Sageman's observation, we concur that without these weak ties, the radicalizing individual and/or groups may stall in the process. Individuals or groups may need critical resources, such as the material to make a bomb or information on which target is appropriate to attack. However, some individuals and small groups have completed the process and conducted successful attacks without these weak ties, which is why the weak ties should be viewed as a catalytic factor more than a necessary condition.

Second, the subject of ideology has been given a lot of attention in the media in the post 9/11 world. Sageman believes that the subject of ideology has received too much attention.¹³¹ Indoctrination into an ideology may not include a deep and nuanced view of

¹²⁸ Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973): 1360–1380.

¹²⁹ Sageman, "A Strategy for Fighting International Islamist Terrorists," 139.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 226.

the Islamic faith for the jihadists, but ideology has some key components that are necessary to the radicalization process: the identity standard (beliefs, values and behaviors associated with the identity), the inclusion or exclusion of groups of people, the identification of “the enemy,” and grievances.

Revisiting the concept of the identity standard in the context of indoctrination, ideology creates the set of meanings that are relevant to the extremist identity. The identity standard is the set of meanings that guide behavior, when an identity is activated, and provides the specific norms in relation to an identity.¹³² The identity standard dictates specific positions along a dimension, such as “good and bad, dominant and submissive, or party going and studious.”¹³³ The indoctrination process can be looked at as nothing more than acquiring the identity standard associated with the extremist identity. Indoctrination traditionally has a negative connotation because of the extreme beliefs that are associated with the identity standard. The individual incorporates the new elements of the identity standard into their existing identity pyramid. As the individual continues to interact with other extremists, their identity standard will be verified, but their other identities may be altered to fit the new meanings held in the extremist identity standard.

Furthermore, it is important to identify the in-group, the out-group (target) and the specific action that is advocated. Jihadist groups outside the United States who are focused on sectarian violence may pose little threat to the United States and yet are extremely dangerous to certain minority groups in their country of origin. By contrast, white supremacists identify a very narrow in-group, a very broad out-group (Jews, homosexuals, and all other races), but often encourage violence against African-Americans. While an initial look at the ideology of a particular group or larger extremist community may reveal one set of beliefs, targets, and methods, Snow, Rochford, Worden and Benford argue that ideology can change over time by frame transformation.¹³⁴ One

¹³² Burke, “Identities and Social Structure: The 2003 Cooley-Mead Award Address,” 7.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ David A. Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,” *American Sociological Review* 15, no. 4 (1986): 474.

example of frame transformation in jihadist ideology is the transformation of focusing on the near enemy to the far enemy as advocated by Al Qaeda. Ideology, like identity and networks, is dynamic and responds to both situational and cognitive factors.

In his work on the effects of religion on adolescents Christian Smith argues that religion provides moral justification and guidance for action;¹³⁵ in a similar way, ideologies also provide moral justification for action. For example, the eco-extremist ideology that exists in the United States today, based on biocentrism, forbids the taking of human life; instead it focuses on economic attacks, often arson, on labs that conduct research using animals, corporate buildings, or equipment.¹³⁶ By contrast, the white supremacist and jihadi ideologies argue that the use of violence is necessary to bring social and political change.

The radicalizing individual may be indoctrinated into the ideology in a variety of ways. The Internet, contact with others, and traditional media are all sources of indoctrination. An individual may be mobilized by a particular event in global politics, or may conduct research on the Internet, or connect to other people through chat rooms or email. Silber and Bhatt highlight the Internet as both a driver and an enabler of radicalization because it provides unfiltered access to ideology.¹³⁷ It is likely that the medium does not affect the process; it is just the vehicle to obtain the ideology and make contact with others. Terrorism researcher Akil Awan, for example, claims that the notion of Internet radicalization is a red herring and the rise of the Internet radicalization term may just be a sign that more media and communication are moving to the Internet.¹³⁸

The third component of this stage of radicalization is identification with grievances. Grievances are especially important to understand the process of radicalization. The identity prominence pyramid provides a helpful lens for

¹³⁵ Christian Smith, "Theorizing Religious Effects among American Adolescents," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42, no. 1 (2003): 20.

¹³⁶ Stefan H. Leader and Peter Probst, "The Earth Liberation Front and Environmental Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15, no. 4 (2003): 40. 37–58.

¹³⁷ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 8.

¹³⁸ Akil N. Awan, "Virtual Jihadist Media: Function, Legitimacy and Radicalizing Efficacy," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10, no. 3 (2007): 389–408.

understanding which grievances are important to a radicalizing individual. Grievances are everywhere in society, but without understanding the prominent identities that an individual or group holds, it is impossible to understand which grievances are relevant. McCauley and Moskalkenko argue that, when an individual or group feels their identity is under attack, the need to retaliate in some way is amplified.¹³⁹

Grievances are another necessary condition. McCauley, for example, attempts to empirically test different mechanisms including political grievance.¹⁴⁰ He finds that “[p]olitical grievance, represented by opposition to U.S. forces in Afghanistan, is the best predictor of a political judgment that the war on terrorism is actually a war on Islam and also predicts favorable opinion of Al Qaeda.”¹⁴¹ McCauley and Moskalkenko argue that severe traumatic events, such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the terror attacks of 9/11, can radicalize large numbers of people quickly.¹⁴²

3. Stage 3: Activism

With an extremist identity, indoctrination, and a grievance, some individuals will move towards activism. Sociologists Pete Simi and Robert Futrell argue that activism creates the infrastructure of hate, which is essential for the survival of the white power movement.¹⁴³ Activism serves as the “slippery slope,”¹⁴⁴ or the purpose of reinforcing the beliefs and values of the movement, connecting with other extremists, and providing meaning and belonging for the individual. Silber and Bhatt’s concept of the “radicalization incubator”¹⁴⁵ is also indicative of the value of activism in the role of

¹³⁹ McCauley and Moskalkenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism,” 423.

¹⁴⁰ Clark McCauley, “Testing Theories of Radicalization in Polls of U.S. Muslims,” *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 12, no. 1 (2012): 296–311.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 309.

¹⁴² McCauley and Moskalkenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism,” 416.

¹⁴³ Pete Simi and Robert Futrell, *American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement’s Hidden Spaces of Hate* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 120.

¹⁴⁴ McCauley and Moskalkenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism,” 420.

¹⁴⁵ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 22.

strengthening commitment to identity. Simi and Futrell demonstrate the value of activism by white power adherents at a backyard bonfire when one individual made the claim that it was acceptable to marry an Indian or a Mexican but not a black person, which was quickly met with rebuttal.¹⁴⁶

At this point the extremist identity is low in prominence and therefore salience, which means it is still subject to the higher order identities and the contact with other extremists reinforces the beliefs from Stage Two through identity verification. In their study of the maintenance of volunteer behavior over a three year period, social psychologists Marta, Manzia, Pozzia, and Vignoles highlight “the more a volunteer performs a role, the more he or she will strengthen his or her volunteer role identity and, subsequently, will also maintain his or her volunteer activity.”¹⁴⁷ Marta et al. also point out the role that peers and significant others play in the maintenance of their volunteer behavior,¹⁴⁸ while Silber and Bhatt describe the same concept, which they call “mental reinforcement activities,” which are used to reinforce or renew individual extremist beliefs.¹⁴⁹ Identity verification is not a singular event, but a constant process that constantly either confirms and strengthens the identity or produces an error and causes minor changes to the identities.

With the evolution and broader access to technology, the Internet has expanded traditional forms of activism by providing readily accessible and anonymous online forums that promote extremist ideas, rhetoric, and images,¹⁵⁰ which serve as virtual radicalization incubators. Silber and Bhatt argue that such incubators serve as radicalizing agents, or nodes, where like-minded individuals are able to congregate, in order to meet the distinct cognitive needs of individuals at various stages.¹⁵¹ This process allows for

¹⁴⁶ Simi and Futrell, *American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement's Hidden Spaces of Hate*, 45.

¹⁴⁷ Elena Marta et al., “Identity and the Theory of Planned Behavior: Predicting Maintenance of Volunteering after Three Years,” *The Journal of Social Psychology* 154, no. 3 (2014): 205.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 47.

¹⁵⁰ Sageman, “A Strategy for Fighting International Islamist Terrorists,” 227.

¹⁵¹ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 8.

mental reinforcement, as they move through the radicalization process.¹⁵² The Internet has expanded the role and reach of activist extremist hubs, individuals or nodes with numerous links, all of which propagate extremist ideologies within radicalization incubators as a dangerous form of activism. Egyptian activist Wael Ghonim, who was instrumental in the social media aspect of the Egyptian uprising, emphasizes that many people who participated in online activism did not attend physical demonstrations and protests.¹⁵³

Activism also is helpful in resolving grievances through the political process with the passage of a new law or similar mechanism to resolve grievances. With a real or perceived inability to resolve the grievance through activism, the individual moves from Stage Three to Stage Four. It is worth noting that most extremists do not advance beyond Stage Three. McCauley and Moskalenko, for example, find from polling data in the U.S. and the UK, “99% of Muslims with radical ideas never engage in radical action.”¹⁵⁴ In other words, of those that progress to Stage Three, only one percent will progress to violent action in Stage Four. This is likely due to a number of factors. As Burke as suggests, the greater degree the person based identity that operates as an individual’s master identity is overtaken by the extremist identity, the higher degree of cognitive association the individual will have with the extremist identity and its networks through reinforced “in group, outgroup” association.¹⁵⁵ As McCauley and Moskalenko identify, this association can lead to an individual perception that attacks on the group are attacks on the individual and vise-versa relative to group successes,¹⁵⁶ thereby further reinforcing the framing of the grievance.

¹⁵² Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 22.

¹⁵³ Wael Ghonim, *Revolution 2.0: The Power of the People Is Greater Than the People in Power: A Memoir* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012).

¹⁵⁴ McCauley and Moskalenko, “Some Things We Think We’ve Learned since 9/11: A Commentary on Marc Sageman’s “the Stagnation in Terrorism Research.””

¹⁵⁵ Burke, “Identity Change,” 10.

¹⁵⁶ McCauley and Moskalenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism,” 416.

4. Stage 4: Criminal or Violent Attack

Creating the criminal and violent extremist labels, as this thesis does, may allow stakeholders and officials to classify the cases they handle more precisely, providing better clarity on the scope of the problem.

This thesis posits that another necessary condition for the progression to Stage Four is the actual or perceived lack of a mechanism to address the grievances associated with the extremist identity. For example, in his work on religious extremists, Sociologist Juergensmeyer argues that the struggle is blocked in real time or in the real world as part of his cosmic war theory.¹⁵⁷ In addition to the lack of ability to resolve the grievance through legal means, the individual or group must believe that action will have a positive effect on the outcome in some way. Martyrs believe that they will earn a special place in the afterlife by their sacrifice in the present life, thus compelling them to action. The white supremacist ideology believes that violent action can spark a race war that will bring about the cleansing of all non-pure races.¹⁵⁸ The combination of the belief that action will have a positive impact and the lack of other means to address the grievance helps to explain why the progression from Stage Three to Stage Four is rare.

Another factor that influences the decision to move from Stage Three to Stage Four is the location of the extremist identity. Burke argues that person based identities are characterized by high salience and high commitment and therefore “may operate like a master identity.”¹⁵⁹ After repeated identity verification and an increase in ties to other extremists, the extremist identity is likely to rise in prominence to the point at which it operates as the master identity. Once the extremist identity is the most prominent identity, all other identities will be subordinate to the extremist identity. Burke argues role and

¹⁵⁷ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, Vol. 13 (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2003).

¹⁵⁸ Simi and Futrell, *American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement's Hidden Spaces of Hate*, 2.

¹⁵⁹ Peter J. Burke et al., *Advances in Identity Theory and Research* (Berlin, Heidelberg, Germany: Springer, 2003), 10.

group based identities are subordinate to person based identities and that when the two are activated together, the more salient will have a greater influence on behavior.¹⁶⁰

While most people traditionally think of extremists only in their violent form, it is important to acknowledge that violent extremism is just one option. The eco-terrorist movement, associated with the Animal Liberation Front/Earth Liberation Front (ALF/ELF), is rich with examples of criminal acts that are motivated by ideology. In Stage Four, the different categories of extremism are separated into violent and criminal acts to facilitate greater specificity in data collection and analysis.

a. Criminal Extremist

The criminal extremist rejects violence against people, but embraces criminal action, such as arson, to further the cause or avenge grievances. The eco-terrorist movement highlights the actions of the criminal extremist, designed to cause financial distress to those that harm the environment, or the individuals perceived to harm the environment. The key is these individuals reject violence against people, though sometimes people are killed or injured during the attacks. The ideology of the eco-extremist movements, such as that of the ALF/ELF, do not approve of the taking of human life,¹⁶¹ indicating that ideology has an impact on action through the identity standard. Criminal extremists may alter their position on violence and move on to become violent extremists. This change may be as a result of frustration through experience or through ideological innovation.

b. Violent Extremist

Finally, violent extremists are the most widely known type of extremist due to the media coverage of their actions. While it is still not understood what causes some individuals to embrace violence, literature from the assessment of risk in the criminal justice system has provided some strong indicators. This research has identified that risk should be considered in two forms: risk status (static risk) and risk state (dynamic

¹⁶⁰ Burke et al., *Advances in Identity Theory and Research*, 11.

¹⁶¹ Leader and Probst, "The Earth Liberation Front and Environmental Terrorism."

risk).¹⁶² Static risk factors are those that do not change over time, or over short amounts of time. Static risk factors that have been associated with violence are age (youth), gender (male), history of violence, depression, and low self-esteem.¹⁶³ On the other hand, dynamic risk factors change over time and contribute to the immediate risk state. Dynamic risk factors include impulsiveness, negative affectivity (anger, negative mood), antisocial attitudes, substance use, and interpersonal relationships.¹⁶⁴ Often static factors are given too much weight in risk assessment, ignoring the current risk state. Relying too much on static factors may increase the assessed level of risk because it ignores the dynamic factors. For the individual who has changed and currently poses little risk in the dynamic factors, a misdiagnosis could actually lead to a relapse in violence from frustration and anger because the hard work to rehabilitate is ignored. Harsh treatment based on the potential to commit violence, is much more likely to create violent individuals than to pacify them. Risk assessment instruments should focus on both static and dynamic factors, but the decision of short term risk should focus more heavily on risk state.

F. ATTRIBUTES

As described in the NYPD model, Silber and Bhatt argue that individuals will exhibit specific attributes at each stage.¹⁶⁵ To add additional value, it is useful to identify attributes that will be present at each stage in the framework. Pressman offers a risk assessment instrument for the assessment of risk for violent extremism.¹⁶⁶ VERA, the Violent Extremism Risk Assessment Instrument, is designed to be a structured

¹⁶² Kevin S. Douglas and Jennifer L. Skeem, "Violence Risk Assessment: Getting Specific About Being Dynamic," *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 11, no. 3 (2005): 347–383.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*.

¹⁶⁶ D. Elaine Pressman, *Risk Assessment Decisions for Violent Political Extremism* (Canada: Public Safety Canada, 2009).

professional judgment (SPJ)¹⁶⁷ tool for the assessment of the risk of violent extremism. The instrument is similar to other empirically validated risk instruments that yield a low, medium, or high risk classification based on a number of factors. The SPJ is designed to be used by a variety of different disciplines and represents a solid foundation upon which the research can build empirical evidence. Pressman cautions that the reliability of the instrument is questionable, and the instrument has yet to be validated. The purpose of the instrument is more to generate debate and discussion than to be employed by law enforcement and researchers at this point.¹⁶⁸ The instrument, in its entirety, is in the appendix.

If the CITIG framework is joined with the attributes of VERA, it is possible to achieve the goal of a framework that articulates both how the process occurs and the specific attributes that manifest at each stage. A standard SPJ tool does not provide a structure that creates causal, or even time-phased, linkages between factors, and, therefore, data collection has not considered the order or timing of different variables. Not only is the presence of variables important, the timing and relation to other variables will be important to codify and record. For instance, if extremist beliefs tend to isolate an individual or group from society, then a change in beliefs toward the extreme should precipitate the isolation from society.

In an effort to delineate the severity of risk for violent extremists, Kebbell and Porter identify four categories of risk factors: standard, moderate, higher, and extreme.¹⁶⁹ The standard risk factors are super-ordinate non-western identity; perception of western policies as being belligerent overseas; perception of domestic counter-terrorism policies as being belligerent to them personally and to their community; isolation from positive

¹⁶⁷ A structured professional judgment (SPJ) tool provides a framework for the assessment of risk that relies on the expertise of the interviewer, best practices from current research, and the factors that are most relevant to the individual being assessed. SPJ tools rely more on the judgment of the interviewer than actuarial assessment tools.

¹⁶⁸ Pressman, *Risk Assessment Decisions for Violent Political Extremism*.

¹⁶⁹ Mark R. Kebbell and Louise Porter, "An Intelligence Assessment Framework for Identifying Individuals at Risk of Committing Acts of Violent Extremism against the West," *Security Journal* 25, no. 3 (2011): 212–228.

members of the out-group; young and male; and receipt of welfare payments.¹⁷⁰ They also highlight that these tend to coincide with the pre-radicalization stage of the NYPD model. The moderate factors identified are involvement in religiously motivated charity work; religious beliefs that support the use of violence; involvement in perceived community defense; accessing jihadist and extremist political materials via the Internet or other media; and demonstrated preparedness to use, or advocate the use of, violence.¹⁷¹ The higher risk factors are membership of, or participation in, radical political groups; isolation from non-radical individuals; justification of killing; dehumanization; engagement with extremely violent media; and operational capability to commit acts of violent extremism.¹⁷² In focusing on the operational capability, Kebbell and Porter highlight ties between individuals that could be leveraged to gain specific capabilities.¹⁷³ Finally, they identify the extreme factors: religiously motivated participation, or attempted participation, in overseas conflicts /training for violent extremism; credible expressions of desire to kill; credible expression of desire for martyrdom; and target selected or target selection. These risk factors are obviously focused toward the Islamic inspired form of extremism, but the labels can be generalized to allow for them to apply to other forms of extremism. Also, these risk factors are intended only to apply to violent extremists, though some might be relevant to the criminal extremist and activist extremist as well. The addition of the new behavioral categories might allow for more experimental studies to refine risk factors.

¹⁷⁰ Kebbell and Porter, “An Intelligence Assessment Framework for Identifying Individuals at Risk of Committing Acts of Violent Extremism against the West,” 218–19.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 219–21.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 221–22.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 223.

G. TYPOLOGIES

Many prominent scholars in the field have articulated different ways to conceive of radicalization from pyramids to staircases to unstructured mechanisms.¹⁷⁴ All of them suggest that the path to radicalization is diverse in many cases, and, therefore, any explanation should allow for this diversity. It is possible within the CITIG framework to allow for different typologies that manifest different attributes in a similar framework. McCauley and Moskalenko propose two separate typologies: the disconnected-disordered and the caring-compelled.¹⁷⁵ They argue that the disconnected-disordered type is categorized by mental health issues, weak social ties, and personal experience with weapons outside the military.¹⁷⁶ In contrast, the caring-compelled type feel more empathy and these feelings push them to act.¹⁷⁷ These two types are not mutually exclusive from the framework suggested; in fact they may help to validate it. The combination of attributes, stages, and longitudinal data will help provide a better explanation of the process and will allow for a more nuanced understanding. Smallest space analysis, as described in Chapter II, has provided enormous insight into the clustering of criminal behaviors, providing clarity for researchers.¹⁷⁸ As data collection improves, smallest space analysis may help provide empirical support for all of the behavioral outputs: activist, criminal, and violent extremists.

H. CONCLUSION

The first section of this chapter analyzed supporting theories and recent proposed frameworks supporting the radicalization process. From this body of literature, the CITIG radicalization framework was proposed, which articulates the interaction of antecedent

¹⁷⁴ Horgan, “From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism”; McCauley and Moskalenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism”; Moghaddam, “Psychological Processes and ‘the Staircase to Terrorism’”; Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*.

¹⁷⁵ McCauley and Moskalenko, “Some Things We Think We’ve Learned since 9/11: A Commentary on Marc Sageman’s ‘the Stagnation in Terrorism Research.’”

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Canter and Youngs, *Investigative Psychology: Offender Profiling and the Analysis of Criminal Action*, 332.

conditions, individual crisis, identity, extremist indoctrination, and contact with extremists that when tied to grievances collectively cause an individual to progress through the radicalization process.

In the next two chapters, the CITIG radicalization framework will be used to analyze a broad spectrum of extremist ideologies, as well as both criminal and violent extremist outputs. In Chapter IV, the framework will be used to evaluate two Islamic inspired case studies, and in Chapter V, it will be used to evaluate a white supremacist and an environmental extremist. The case studies will be used evaluate the integrity of the CITIG framework and identify a broad range of attributes (cognitive, behavioral, contextual, demographic) by stage using VERA as a foundation to refine the risk assessment instrument.

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IV. ISLAMIC-INSPIRED CASE STUDIES

Radicalization is a complex process. In this chapter, two cases of radicalization are presented and analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the process. Since 9/11 the focus of policy makers, law enforcement, and the media has been on Islamic-inspired cases of radicalization to violent extremism.

This chapter describes two case studies of Islamic radicalization selected from the FBI's list of convicted terrorists: Faisal Shahzad, the Times Square bomber; and Mohamud Osman Mohamud, the Christmas tree bomber. It uses the CITIG framework created in Chapter III to analyze these two cases in the hopes of better understanding how these individuals became radicalized.

The chapter finds support for the CITIG radicalization framework and for the VERA instrument. The case studies confirm the importance of social ties and the formation and transformation of an extremist identity in the radicalization process. The risk factors identified in VERA are generally consistent with the two cases, but a few of the factors may need to be refined by future research projects.

The chapter is broken into four sections. The first section offers a brief review of the CITIG framework created in Chapter III. The second section presents two case studies of Islamic extremism with specific attributes from the VERA instrument. The third section presents an analysis of the similarities and unique factors of the two case studies. The fourth section is the conclusion.

A. RADICALIZATION FRAMEWORK

The CITIG framework created in Chapter III has four stages. Stage One begins with a personal crisis that is exacerbated by antecedent conditions, such as a lack of strong social ties that typically provide an individual with support networks and grounding within their existing identity and social structure. In a search to resolve the crisis an individual will make new ties or find new ideologies, which result in the formation of a new identity that will continue to evolve throughout the radicalization process. Stage Two consists of the reframing of the personal crisis that links the evolving

identity to a grievance through indoctrination that may precede or follow contact with extremists. An individual will progress from Stage Two to Stage Three when they take actions to gain acceptance and approval (identity verification) of the extremist group. In Stage Three the individual begins activism on behalf of the perceived grievances of the new extremist identity. Stage Four occurs when there is a lack of a resolution mechanism for the grievance or crisis and the extremist begins operational planning to execute a specific action, criminal or violent, with which to force a resolution to their grievance.

In addition to the CITIG radicalization framework, the case studies also provide the opportunity to identify specific attributes using the VERA instrument. VERA is the first risk assessment instrument developed specifically for violent extremists and each of the various factors are scored on a low, medium, and high level. VERA has not been empirically validated and, therefore, should not be used to predict risk of violent extremism.¹⁷⁹ We analyze the factors in VERA to examine the construct validity of the instrument. The items in the instrument will also serve as the basis for identifying specific attributes that appear at each stage of the radicalization process.

This framework will be applied to analyze the cases of Faisal Shahzad and Mohamud Osman Mohamud.

1. Case 1: Faisal Shahzad

Faisal Shahzad was born in Pakistan on June 30, 1979. He grew up in a wealthy family and received a good education in his childhood years, although he did not always achieve good grades. His father was a military officer in the Pakistani Air Force and travelled around when Faisal was young. In 1999, Faisal came to the United States to pursue an undergraduate degree from Southeastern University, until he transferred and completed school at University of Bridgeport in Connecticut. On May 1, 2010, Shahzad drove an SUV into Times Square in New York and attempted to detonate the VBIED. The path from his arrival in the United States to this attack will be examined using the CITIG framework above.

¹⁷⁹ Pressman, *Risk Assessment Decisions for Violent Political*, i.

a. Stage 1

Faisal Shahzad came to the United States on January 16, 1999 at the age of 19.¹⁸⁰ While attending University of Bridgeport, Shahzad would go to night clubs in New York City and showed little interest in Islam.¹⁸¹ One college friend remarked that Shahzad was not very good in school, but had numerous passions outside of school including cars, working out, cooking, and art; his friend remarked “back then it was all about fast cars and becoming something.”¹⁸² This was Shahzad’s life until September 11, 2001. A friend of Shahzad’s later noted that a few days after the attacks he said, “They had it coming.”¹⁸³

For Shahzad, 9/11 served as the personal crisis that began his journey through the radicalization process. He believed that the west had conspired to mistreat Muslims.¹⁸⁴ Shahzad identified 9/11 as the beginning of his process of radicalization in a video he recorded that was released by Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) after his failed Time Square attack. Shahzad further said he wanted to understand why Bin Laden would attack the United States, and he found the answer by reading the Qur’an.; Shahzad in fact referred to this time as “coming back to Islam.”¹⁸⁵ He acknowledged that he was raised as a Muslim, but claimed he did not understand his religion, because he had not read the Qur’an. Shahzad’s reference to coming back to Islam signaled the creation of his extremist identity, in his particular case a jihadist identity. This identity was added into his prominence pyramid, but it was subordinate to his fierce Pashtun identity,¹⁸⁶ family identity, and student identity. With time, however, the jihadist identity would grow in prominence.

¹⁸⁰ Andrea Elliot, Sabrina Tavernise, and Anne Barnard, “For Times Sq. Suspect, Long Roots of Discontent,” *NY Times*, May 15, 2010.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Umar Media, “A Brave Effort by Faisal Shahzad to Attack United States in Its Own Land,” (Times Video), 6:43. 2010.

¹⁸⁶ Elliot, Tavernise, and Barnard, “For Times Sq. Suspect, Long Roots of Discontent.”

b. Stage 2

As his jihadi identity was formed, Shahzad developed the specific beliefs, norms and values which make up the identity standard for that specific identity. The current jihadi ideology is one that has evolved over the past 70 years, beginning in earnest with Sayyid Qutb.¹⁸⁷ It has gone through several changes, but the ideology in general follows a fundamentalist approach, arguing that Islam has gone off the true path, it is in imminent danger—both by external forces, especially the west, and internal corruption—and only jihad can get it back on course. These activists aim to create religious states that uphold Sharia law and governance according to the Qur'an and the Sunna, the words and actions of the Prophet Mohammed.

While jihadists argue amongst themselves on specific targets and the path to upholding the true tenets of Islam, the Al Qaeda global jihad narrative resonated specifically with Shahzad. Shahzad clearly articulated his discontent with the United States, Christians, Jews, democracy, and U.S. law throughout his video, providing specific justification of his views from the Qur'an and Hadith.¹⁸⁸ At the time of his conviction, Shahzad warned the U.S. judge and court that the war between the United States and Muslims had just begun and Islam would not lose.¹⁸⁹ Shahzad was also known to quote Ibn Taymiyyah and Abul Ala Mawdudi,¹⁹⁰ both central figures in the jihadi ideological doctrine. He clearly identified the United States as the enemy, responsible for humiliating Muslims around the world. He further argued that violent jihad was the only way to fix the problem, echoing the ideology of Al Qaeda.

In addition to the ideological component of his identity, Shahzad developed a mix of new ties at college, both among western Muslims and fellow Pakistani students, including particularly other jihadists. During this time, Shahzad became increasingly critical and hostile towards U.S. policy in the Middle East. In 2003, he was part of a

¹⁸⁷ Yvonne Y. Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press), 67.

¹⁸⁸ Umar Media, "A Brave Effort by Faisal Shahzad to Attack United States in Its Own Land."

¹⁸⁹ USA v. Shahzad, Criminal Docket for Case #: 1:10-cr-00541-MGC All Defendants (SDNY 2010).

¹⁹⁰ Elliot, Tavernise, and Barnard, "For Times Sq. Suspect, Long Roots of Discontent."

Google Groups email message that had pictures of detainees in the U.S. detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba with the “Shame on you Bush” written at the bottom.¹⁹¹ This particular issue was another factor in the process of his radicalization.

Shahzad was further radicalized by Anwar Al Awlaki, a U.S. born Yemeni jihadist. Shahzad contacted both Al Awlaki and Baitullah Mehsud via the Internet. In his video, Shahzad specifically thanked the English-speaking clerics that spoke about jihad freely, saying “If it weren’t for you, I probably would not be here today.”¹⁹² This denotes the power of extremist ties, both physical and virtual.

Shahzad identified with a number of grievances, including those that were personally relevant and those that had no personal resonance but associated with his jihadist identity. Due to his Pashtun heritage, personally relevant grievances included the United States’ involvement in Afghanistan, U. S. abuses of Muslim prisoners in Abu Ghraib, and the perceived humiliation of Muslims in Afghanistan and Pakistan.¹⁹³ The 2003 invasion of Iraq in particular greatly angered Shahzad. He believed that the United States deliberately invented the chemical weapons threat as an excuse to invade Muslim lands. Shahzad was extremely hostile toward the U.S. government for the drone strikes in Pakistan and Yemen. Shahzad also identified with a number of grievances that did not directly affect him, such as the Palestinian conflict, prisoners in Guantanamo Bay, and the suffering of Muslims from Tunisia to India.¹⁹⁴ Finally, Shahzad was angry at the people around him for his lack of financial success. While Shahzad found steady employment and made between \$50 thousand and \$70 thousand per year, he was constantly angry that he was not being paid enough.¹⁹⁵

In July 2004, Shahzad purchased a home in Shelton, Connecticut in preparation for an arranged marriage. On December 25, 2004, Shahzad married Huma Mian in

¹⁹¹ Elliot, Tavernise, and Barnard, “For Times Sq. Suspect, Long Roots of Discontent.”

¹⁹² Umar Media, “A Brave Effort by Faisal Shahzad to Attack United States in Its Own Land.” 32:00.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Elliot, Tavernise, and Barnard, “For Times Sq. Suspect, Long Roots of Discontent.”

Pakistan, and had a child shortly thereafter.¹⁹⁶ The process of getting married and having a child appeared to slow the radicalization process somewhat, as the husband and father identities took prominence over the jihadist identity for a while.

c. Stage 3

In February 2006, Shahzad sent an email with the subject line “My Beloved and Peaceful Ummah.” This became the transition point from a latent extremist to an activist extremist. The email was critical of democracy and urged people to follow the teachings of the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet instead of conforming to man’s laws and norms. He also demonstrated a strict adherence to Islamic laws, praying five times a day, abstaining from alcohol, and attending several different mosques.¹⁹⁷ These behavior changes suggest that his jihadi identity had gained prominence and that he began activating the jihadi identity amongst certain friends. He also began to distance himself from childhood friends in Pakistan and his father’s social circle. During this time period, acquaintances noted that he was irritated all of the time and complained about the cost of things in America.¹⁹⁸

In 2008, Shahzad travelled to Pakistan and asked for his father’s permission to fight in the jihad in Afghanistan against the United States, but his father refused his request. He also began to disagree greatly with his father over beliefs and practices. Begrudgingly, Shahzad returned to the United States and continued his life. The act of seeking permission from his father indicated that Shahzad held his father and his family’s support of his actions in high esteem, indicating that his family identity was still more prominent than his jihadist identity.

In 2009, Shahzad’s marriage became strained for a number of reasons but, most notably, because he demanded that his wife wear hijab. The request for his wife to wear hijab may only be a sign of increased religious piety; however, Shahzad became more pious beginning in 2006, and there is no evidence that during that three-year period he

¹⁹⁶ Elliot, Tavernise, and Barnard, “For Times Sq. Suspect, Long Roots of Discontent.”

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

requested his wife become more conservative. The co-occurrence of challenging his father's authority and making more demands on his wife could indicate a change in prominence of the family and extremist identities. His wife left him in 2009 after he called from the airport demanding that they leave the United States immediately and return to Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, where his wife's family lived. This separation of close martial ties, which would have otherwise inhibited his behavior, allowed Shahzad to travel to Pakistan and devote all of his time to his jihadist identity.

Shahzad left for Pakistan in July of 2009 and found his way to a training camp run by TTP that taught him specific skills in making improvised explosives, conducting target reconnaissance and employing operational security measures.¹⁹⁹ While at the training camp, Shahzad received five days of weapons training and five days of bomb making instructions.²⁰⁰ Since Shahzad had recently attained U.S. citizenship, he was an ideal candidate for a domestic attack. He also agreed to make a video explaining his beliefs, stating his intentions to conduct the attack, and to inspire others to conduct further attacks. His final video message to other jihadists watching stated, "Anything is possible, you can make an attack, you just have to try."²⁰¹ This video was the last act of the activist extremist trying to inspire other people to join the cause. Shahzad's return to the United States represented his transition from an extremist activist to a violent extremist.

d. Stage 4

In February 2010, Shahzad returned from Pakistan for the last time and immediately began operational preparations. He paid cash for a small apartment, bought a Nissan Pathfinder off of Craigslist, and began to gather materials including fertilizer, propane, gasoline, fireworks, and other necessary materials for a VBIED.²⁰² He accessed websites that stream video of Times Square to determine the best location and time to

¹⁹⁹ USA v. Shahzad, 1.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 5.

²⁰¹ Umar Media, "A Brave Effort by Faisal Shahzad to Attack United States in Its Own Land," 39:37.

²⁰² USA v. Shahzad, 7.

conduct an attack.²⁰³ The video cameras also provided Shahzad with assurances that his attack would be recorded for his video that would be released after his attack. During the three months he spent preparing for the attack, Shahzad also met with two separate couriers to receive \$12,000 for expenses related to the attack from TTP; this was in addition to \$5,000 that he was given in Pakistan while attending the training camp.²⁰⁴ In March 2010, Shahzad bought a semi-automatic rifle to use in the event that he was captured before the bomb could be planted.²⁰⁵

On May 1, 2010, Shahzad parked the Nissan Pathfinder in Times Square and left the vehicle filled with explosives, intending to kill and injure many people. Shahzad used a long fuse to allow for him to escape. He left the car and walked toward a subway station to take the train back to Connecticut; however the bomb never detonated. Shahzad said that when the first bomb failed he was going to build another and plan a separate attack, but the police began to close in and he tried to flee the country.²⁰⁶ He was arrested at JFK airport prior to his departure. Shahzad pled guilty to all charges and demonstrated no remorse during the sentencing hearing. He told the judge at the sentencing hearing to “Brace yourselves, because the war with Muslims has just begun. Consider me only a first droplet of the flood that will follow me.”²⁰⁷

Shahzad’s progression through the radicalization process is marked by several key events. He had a personal crisis on 9/11, which marked the beginning of Stage One. He developed contact with extremists and began the indoctrination process, becoming a latent extremist in Stage Two. His identification with grievances in support of an extremist ideology led to activism in Stage Three. Finally, the separation of protective ties and the inability to reconcile the grievance through activism led him to transition to Stage Four and begin operational preparations for his attack.

²⁰³ USA v. Shahzad, 7.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 8.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 2.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

The following extremist attributes are identified below in the medium to high range, using VERA.

e. Attributes

Stage: 1

- A.9 Identity problems
- A.7 Hate, frustration and persecution
- D.1 Sex Male= High
- D.2 Married <1year= High
- D. 3 Age <30= High

Stage: 2

- A. 1 Attachment to ideology justifying violence
- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
- A.7 Hate frustration, persecution
- A.9 Identity problems
- C.3 Direct contact with violent extremists
- C.4 Anger at political decisions, actions of country
- P.5 Significant other/community support
- D.1 Sex Male= High
- D.2 Married <1year= High
- D. 3 Age <30= High

Stage: 3

- A. 1 Attachment to ideology justifying violence
- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.4 Dehumanization of identified target
- A.5 Internalized martyrdom to die for cause
- A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
- A.7 Hate frustration, persecution
- A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging
- A.9 Identity problems
- A.10 [Level of] Empathy for those outside own group
- C.1 User of extremist websites
- C.2 Peer/Community support for violent action (peer support observed)
- C.3 Direct contact with violent extremists
- C.4 Anger at political decisions, actions of country
- H.5 Travel for non-state sponsored training/ fighting
- H.6 Glorification of violent action
- D.1 Sex Male= High
- D.2 Married >1 year= Low
- D. 3 Age <30= High

Stage: 4

- A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying violence
- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.4 Dehumanization of identified target
- A.5 Internalized martyrdom to die for cause
- A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
- A.7 Hate frustration, persecution
- A.10 Empathy for those outside own group
- C.1 User of extremist websites
- C.2 Peer/Community support for violent action (peer support observed)
- C.3 Direct contact with violent extremists
- C.4 Anger at political decisions, actions of country
- H.5 Travel for non-state sponsored training/ fighting
- H.6 Glorification of violent action
- D.1 Sex Male= High
- D. 3 Age >30= Low

2. Case 2: Mohamud Osman Mohamud

On November 26, 2010, a 19-year old naturalized Somali was arrested while attempting to detonate what he thought to be a VBIED at Portland, Oregon's annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony. This attack would have resulted in numerous civilian casualties, including women and children. The individual in question was Mohamed Osman Mohamud, and he was a member of what he believed to be a three man Islamic extremist cell, which in reality consisted of himself and two FBI undercover employees (UCEs).

Mohamud was born on August 11, 1991 in Mogadishu, Somalia, during a time of turbulent conflict in that country. Prior to Mohamud's immigration to the United States, he and his family endured a long period of physical and emotional instability during a chaotic transition²⁰⁸ that manifested itself in, among other things, delaying his physical development.²⁰⁹ Upon his arrival in the United States and his family's reunification, his parents set out to assimilate themselves and their family into American culture. However, the family experienced yet another traumatic event that deeply affected Mohamud when their residence burned down, nearly killing his whole family. Despite this, Mohamud did

²⁰⁸ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 478, 4, (D. Or. 2013).

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

well in school, made friends, and participated in sports.²¹⁰ Then, in 2006, at the age of 15, Mohamud began to recognize the diaspora nature of his ethnicity, culture, and religion²¹¹ and began to undergo what his father described during his court trial as an “identity crisis.”²¹²

a. Stage 1

At this point, Mohamud entered Stage One of the radicalization process, which was caused by a crisis of identity. In that year, Mohamud’s family structure began to dissolve, which ultimately resulted in his parents getting divorced.²¹³ The divorce and other family practices that he considered religiously lenient put Mohamud’s family and religious identities in a state of crisis, which likely caused those identities to fluctuate in prominence. His family’s instability prompted Mohamud to begin a search for contacts within religion that could provide him with stability in his crisis, thus making Mohamud vulnerable to extremist Islamic ideologies.

b. Stage 2

At some point between 2007 and 2008, Mohamud met an Islamic extremist named Amr Suleiman Ali Al-Ali, a Saudi national studying in the United States at North Seattle Community College and Portland State University.²¹⁴ In 2010, after returning to Saudi Arabia, Al-Ali was arrested by Saudi authorities who named him as one of their 47 most wanted terrorists.²¹⁵ Prior to Al-Ali’s detention by Saudi authorities, it was Mohamud’s friendship with Al-Ali that was the critical tie that influenced Mohamud’s identity and direction into Islamic extremism, as well as marked his transition into Stage Two of the radicalization process as a latent extremist while he searched for stability of

²¹⁰ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 478, 5 (D. Or. 2012).

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid., 3.

²¹³ Ibid., 6.

²¹⁴ Bryan Denson, “Shadowy Saudi, a Former PSU Student, Figures in Portland Bomb Plot Case,” *The Oregonian*, October 19, 2012.

²¹⁵ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 228, 6 (D. Or. 2012).

identities. Al-Ali's influence would continue to play a critical role through Stage Four of Mohamud's radicalization.

On February 8, 2009, Mohamud expanded his contact with extremists as he reached out and established email contact with Islamic extremist Samir Khan in response to Khan's call for authors for *Jihad Recollections*. Initially, Mohamud agreed to write at least one article a month for the publication; however, the contact between the two increased between February and August of 2009, with the exchange of approximately 150 emails focused on the development and propagation of material devoted to radical, violent Islamic jihad.²¹⁶ Khan proclaimed himself "Al Qaeda to the core," and like Mohamed was raised in the United States until 2009 when he left for Yemen to become a propagandist for Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP); his mission was to motivate Islamic inspired extremists in the West to conduct "lone wolf" attacks.²¹⁷

In trial testimony, Khan was identified as Mohamud's mentor and further evidence was presented that showed Mohamud was influenced by several extremist clerics, including Anwar Al-Awlaki.²¹⁸ This relationship affirms his Islamic extremist ideological indoctrination process from strong personal ties, as well as from weak and distant ties via the Internet as the communication medium. The following months were marked with Mohamud's continued indoctrination, framing his grievance with the perception that Muslims were being unjustifiably killed and their lands occupied by western invaders.²¹⁹ As the grievance formation developed, Mohamud began to transition into Stage Three as an activist extremist.

c. Stage 3

As an activist extremist, Mohamud submitted four articles between April and August of 2009, which were published under the pen names Ibnul Mubarak and Abu Talha. In his articles, he discussed how to physically and mentally prepare for violent

²¹⁶ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 228, 2 (D. Or. 2012).

²¹⁷ Suzanne Kelly, "Samir Khan: Proud to be an American Traitor," *CNN*, September 30, 2011, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/09/30/world/meast/analysis-yemen-samir-khan>.

²¹⁸ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 477, 4 (D. Or. 2013).

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

jihad. He also describe operational practices for ambushing American helicopters in Afghanistan and killing wounded soldiers; he offered analyses on both the role of al-Qaeda's information operations prior to 9/11,²²⁰ and on methods for jihadi groups to operate within Europe undetected.²²¹ Mohamud's commitment to writing for *Jihad Recollections* waned at this point, likely as a result of his desire to become operational as a violent extremist when he realized that activism could not provide a resolution mechanism for his grievance.

On August 31, 2009, Al-Ali emailed Mohamud information about a Yemeni school to use as a cover and detailed instructions to facilitate his travel to Yemen.²²² Upon receiving the information, Mohamud approached his father, Osman, regarding his desire to travel to Yemen to study Islam at the Dar Al-Hadith School. Osman refused Mohamud's request and confiscated his passport. Following his conversation with Mohamud, Osman contacted the FBI the same day to express his concerns about his son potentially being recruited by extremists. His father informed them that Mohamud was still a child, who was easily susceptible to influence and being brainwashed.²²³ Mohamud's Imam reiterated Osman's concern during an interview with FBI agents later that year. He stated that Mohamud was looking for guidance and was easily susceptible to influence.²²⁴ It is at this point that Mohamud began to demonstrate a desire to be actively recruited into a violent extremist group.

Having been denied travel to Yemen by his father, Mohamud enrolled as a freshman at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon in the fall of 2009 with the aim of studying engineering. During his time in college, he engaged in sex, drugs, and alcohol use. He later described to the FBI UCEs, and recorded in his personal journal, that these activities were an effort to create a double life to prevent him from being identified as an

²²⁰ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 228, 4 (D. Or. 2012).

²²¹ Ibid., 5.

²²² Ibid., 6.

²²³ Ibid., 6–7.

²²⁴ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 478, 17 (D. Or. 2013).

extremist.²²⁵ This could also potentially indicate that Mohamud was in a state of identity conflict due to the creation of newly formed weak ties that were pulling him away from Islamic extremism and back towards non-religious activities. Additionally, in November 2009, he began to demonstrate violent tendencies when he was accused of raping a fellow female student. However, no evidence was uncovered to indicate that the incident was anything more than a consensual encounter; therefore, Mohamud was never charged with the rape.

As a result of Mohamud's extremist ties and behaviors, the FBI initiated email contact with Mohamud as part of their investigation on November 9, 2009. This contact was initially conducted through a FBI confidential source named "Bill Smith," and from November 2009 to August 2010, he and Mohamud exchange 44 emails that consisted of propagating extremist ideologies, discussions on how to maintain operational security, and depictions about Mohamud's desires to become operational in support of violent jihad overseas.²²⁶ As a tie that helped to facilitate the propagation of an extremist ideology, Smith is considered yet another of Mohamud's many extremist contacts.

In December 2009, the FBI electronically monitored communication between Mohamud and Al-Ali that originated out of the federally administered territory of northwest Pakistan, a location known to strongly support and train the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.²²⁷ This communication consisted of Al-Ali's recruitment of Mohamud to join him in violent jihad,²²⁸ to which Mohamud responded, "Just tell me what I need to do."²²⁹ Al-Ali then put him in contact with Abdul Hadi, who would facilitate Mohamud's travel to join Al-Ali.²³⁰ However, Mohamud was unable to contact Hadi.²³¹

²²⁵ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 228, 7–8.

²²⁶ Ibid., 8–9.

²²⁷ Ibid., 9–10.

²²⁸ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 477, 4 (D. Or. 2012).

²²⁹ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 228, 10 (D. Or. 2012).

²³⁰ Ibid., 10.

²³¹ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 1, 9–10 (D. Or. 2010).

With a second failed attempt to leave the United States, Mohamud returned to activism by accessing and using extremist Islamic websites and social networking forums. According to Evan Kohlmann, a terrorism consultant and expert witness at Mohamud's trial, these sites provided Mohamud the chance to "directly interact with radical religious figures, militant leaders, and like-minded recruits living in their own community."²³² Mohamud's online postings included a hit list of individuals who had offended Allah and Mohamud's encouragement to others to leave suspicious packages in urban areas to cause mass panic.²³³ These online activities enabled Mohamud to connect to other extremist and provide verification of his extremist identity through in-group versus out-group verification.

d. Stage 4

On June 14, 2010, Mohamud was prevented from boarding a flight to Kodiak, Alaska, as a result of being placed on a no-fly list, following Mohamud's father's contact with the FBI. In later discussion with the FBI's UCEs, Mohamud disclosed that the purpose of the trip was to earn money to facilitate his travel to Yemen and that he felt betrayed by his parents reporting him to the FBI.²³⁴ During the trial, the prosecution argued that, at this point of the radicalization process, Mohamud had fully accepted an extremist belief system that violent action against U.S. civilians was justified to resolve his grievance.²³⁵ At his trial, evidence was also presented that Mohamud had admitted to feeling suicidal and that he lacked direction in his life during this time.²³⁶ In his own statements, Mohamud admitted that "the people he thought were al-Qaeda saved his life because 'I finally felt like I belonged;' 'I felt like they cared for me;' and 'They gave me something to do.'"²³⁷ This is likely linked to multiple antecedent factors interacting in his life that caused him to feel isolated: the rape accusation, guilt from his secular life

²³² United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 477, 3.

²³³ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 228, 12–14.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 12–13.

²³⁵ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 477, 2.

²³⁶ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 520, 5 (D. Or. 2014).

²³⁷ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 228, 5.

conflicting with his Islamic identity, being a member of a diaspora community, the recent discovery that his parents had reported him to the FBI, the divorce of his parents, and others factors not detailed in court documents. Combined, these stressors resulted in the identity crisis that made Mohamud seek recruitment into violent extremism.²³⁸

On June 23, 2010, the FBI UCE1, known as Youssef, emailed Mohamud, pretending to be an associate of Al-Ali's, offering to help Mohamud as an Islamic brother.²³⁹ After Mohamud's initial operational security concerns were alleviated,²⁴⁰ he considered the terrorist cell comprised of Youssef and UCE2, known as Hussein, as a means to execute a VBIED style attack on U.S. soil.²⁴¹ This assumption was based on the technical knowledge he believed Hussein had about explosives,²⁴² and that he himself lacked.²⁴³ Mohamud later explained that, in order to execute his proposed attack on Pioneer Square, he needed "the right people" to help him execute it, specifically Hussein to help him build a VBIED.²⁴⁴ He expressed that it was his desire to see the bodies of the enemies of God torn everywhere and that it was his intent for "whoever is attending that event to be, to leave either dead or injured," including women and children.²⁴⁵ Not only did he intend to commit a mass atrocity, but he believed the deaths were justified.²⁴⁶

This mindset indicates an extremist interpretation of Islam, which was a product of his personal and online ties with violent extremists and possibly nurtured further by the dialogue between Mohamud, Youssef and Hussein in the context of group polarization, with Hussein's documented comments justifying violent extremism through his

²³⁸ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 520, 23.

²³⁹ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 228, 15.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 16.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 16–17.

²⁴² Ibid., 18–20.

²⁴³ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 478, 18.

²⁴⁴ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 477, 7.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 10.

²⁴⁶ Department of Justice, "Convicted Bomb Plotter Sentenced to 30 Years," *Office of Public Affairs*, October 1, 2014.

statements quoting, “an eye for an eye.”²⁴⁷ When asked by Hussein what Mohamud would have done if he had never met Youssef or himself, Mohamud explained that he would have traveled to Saudi Arabia to get in touch with people that could facilitate his desire of violent extremism.²⁴⁸ These factors demonstrate a clear transition point for Mohamud into Stage Four, violent extremism, of the radicalization process; however, until this point, due to a lack of means, Mohamud was unable carry out his desire to conduct an attack on behalf of his violent extremist ideology.

Between September and December 2010, further meetings between the three cell members consisted of planning,²⁴⁹ acquiring components necessary for the VBIED, reconnaissance of the target location at Pioneer Square,²⁵⁰ the detonation of a “test” bomb, and a post-attack propaganda video of Mohamud that articulated his grievance that condemned America, its military, their occupation of Muslim lands, and glorified Allah.²⁵¹

On November 26, 2010, the day of the planned attack, Mohamud’s actions demonstrated he had completed the transition to a violent extremist. While positioning the VBIED with Hussein, Mohamud expressed his pleasure with the bomb and reaffirmed his desire to carry out the attack. He then armed the device by attaching its blasting cap.²⁵² After moving to a predetermined safe location, Mohamud attempted twice to initiate the device before he was arrested by the FBI. Immediately following his arrest, Mohamud began yelling “Allahu Akhbar” and violently kicking the law enforcement officers in the vehicle with him until he was restrained.²⁵³

Mohamud’s progression through the radicalization process has several key turning points, including an identity crisis as a teenager in Stage One; contact with a

²⁴⁷ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 477, 8.

²⁴⁸ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 228, 22.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 22–24.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 25–26.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 26–29.

²⁵² United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 1, 34 (D. Or. 2010).

²⁵³ United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, 228, 32–34.

plethora of extremists and indoctrination as a latent extremist that continued from stages two through four; grievance framing in support of an extremist ideology and activism in support of it in Stage Three; and finally the inability to reconcile the grievance through activism, resulting in a transition to Stage Four with the assistance of facilitators that provided Mohamud with the technical means to execute an attack.

e. Attributes

The following extremist attributes are identified in the medium to high range in his radicalization using VERA.

Stage: 1

- A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
- A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging
- A.9 Identity problems
- H.1 Early exposure to violence in home
- D.1 Sex Male = High
- D.3 Age < 30 = High

Stage: 2

- A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying violence
- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
- A.7 Hate, frustration, persecution
- A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging
- A.9 Identity problems
- C.2 Peer/community support for violent action (peer support observed)
- C.3 Contact with violent extremists
- C.4 Anger at political/foreign policy actions of country
- H.1 Early exposure to violence in home
- D.1 Sex Male = High
- D.3 Age < 30 = High

Stage: 3

- A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying violence
- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.4 Dehumanization of identified target
- A.5 Internalized martyrdom to die for cause
- A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
- A.7 Hate, frustration, persecution
- A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging

- A.9 Identity problems
- A.10 [Level of] Empathy for those outside own group
- C.1 Participant/user of extremist websites
- C.2 Peer/Community support for violent action (peer support observed)
- C.3 Contact with violent extremists
- C.4 Anger at political/foreign policy actions of country
- H.1 Early exposure to violence in home
- H.6 Glorification of violent action
- D.1 Sex Male = High
- D.3 Age < 30 = High

Stage: 4

- A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying violence
- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.4 Dehumanization of identified target
- A.5 Internalized martyrdom to die for cause
- A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
- A.7 Hate, frustration, persecution
- A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging
- A.9 Identity problems
- A.10 [Level of] Empathy for those outside own group
- C.2 Peer/community support for violent action (peer support observed)
- C.3 Contact with violent extremists
- C.4 Anger at political/foreign policy actions of country
- H.1 Early exposure to violence in home
- H.6 Glorification of violent action
- D.1 Sex Male = High
- D.3 Age < 30 = High

B. ANALYSIS

On the surface, these two cases demonstrate great variation, a Pakistani man living in Connecticut who immigrated to the United States for better education, and a Somali-American youth living in Washington State. Despite the differences in race, ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic origin, the two cases demonstrate fairly consistent trajectories. This finding echoes Silber and Bhatt's finding that "[i]n spite of the differences in both circumstances and environment in each of the cases, there is a remarkable consistency in the behaviors and trajectory of each of the plots across all the stages."²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ Silber and Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, 7.

This consistency provides the opportunity for intervention if appropriate risk factors can be identified and validated. If further evaluation proves the risk factors as accurate, it will provide communities, law enforcement, and government agencies with a framework from which to develop effective and proactive prevention, intervention, and interdiction strategies. This will help to focus CVE efforts and resources to mitigate the risk factors in each stage of the radicalization process to reduce the risk of violent extremism.

Another key finding in both of these cases is the importance of interaction between individuals and identity transformation throughout the process. In both cases, the radicalization process is perpetuated by the addition of extremist ties and the separation of prosocial ties. For example, Shahzad's marriage and the birth of his first child seem to have delayed the process of radicalization for a short time. If prosocial ties and positive influences on identity are a protective factor, then intervention programs for at risk individuals should stress the creation of such ties. If individuals do not have ties that promote normal values and beliefs, it will be difficult for the individual to change their beliefs.

In addition to ties and identity, activism plays a significant role in both cases. Stage Three of the CITIG framework posits that individuals will engage in activism on behalf of grievances associated with the extremist identity. We posit that activism is necessary to verify the identity of the newly formed extremist identity. Activism provides a sense of meaning and belonging for the individual through identity verification that provides both cognitive and emotional reinforcement.²⁵⁵ Shahzad participated in email groups, sent email messages urging others to take action, professed his views to friends and family, and recorded the video with TTP to inspire others to conduct attacks. Mohamud wrote articles for publication in *Jihad Recollections*, participated in a number of online forums, and tried to leave the country on two separate occasions to engage in jihad. Extremist activism solidifies the identity, demonstrates commitment to other extremists, and begins to reduce the barriers for more criminal and violent behavior.

²⁵⁵ Burke, "Identity Change," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 83.

The cases also provide the basis to identify attributes by stage using VERA. In general, the cases support the instrument, but some items could be refined. The demographic factors (D.2, D.3) are challenged by Shahzad's case in that he was married over one year when he conducted the attack and he was over 30. The cases also suggest that the contextual factor peer/community support for violent action (C.2) should be separated into two separate factors: one for peer and one for community. Furthermore, both cases demonstrate peer support for the extremists, but neither had community support for their action, indicating that these two factors are separate and distinct.

Additionally, the contact with extremists factor (C.3) appears to be too broad. Both developed contact with extremists through both virtual and traditional means, but the types of extremist contacts could also be significant. Mohamud needed the support of someone with technical expertise in bomb-making since he could not travel to receive training, identifying that contact with particular skill sets should be explored. We use the term "facilitator" to identify particular contacts with technical expertise, as opposed to general support for the extremist identity. These items should be investigated in future research to determine if these cases highlight significant shortcomings, or if the variance is an artifact of the small sample.

C. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we analyzed two Islamic-inspired cases of radicalization to violent extremism using the CITIG radicalization framework developed in Chapter III. These cases provided initial validation for the framework and identified attributes present during each stage of the process. The two cases provide greater insight into the complexity of the radicalization process and highlight the variation between cases. In order to broaden the sample of cases for the CITIG radicalization framework, Chapter V will analyze two more cases; a white supremacist and an eco-terrorist.

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V. WHITE SUPREMACIST AND ECO-EXTREMIST CASE STUDIES

Islamic-inspired extremism has captured the focus of media and policy makers over the last decade, but other forms of extremism exist and pose considerable threats to security. This chapter will expand its examination of case studies to non-Islamic forms of extremism by analyzing two cases of radicalization in the United States: Kevin William Harpham, a white supremacist; and Briana Waters, an eco-extremist.

This chapter will use the CITIG framework created in Chapter III to analyze these cases. It also makes a distinction between violent and criminal extremists, noting that violent extremists focus on harming individuals or groups of people, whereas criminal extremists aim to destroy property. Finally, this chapter uses the VERA instrument to evaluate both cases.

This chapter finds support for the CITIG framework, specifically in stages two through four. As posited in Stage Two of the framework, individuals either make contact with an extremist that leads to indoctrination, or begin indoctrination that results in the development of ties with extremists. Briana Waters made a tie that led to indoctrination, while Kevin Harpham began an indoctrination that resulted in ties with extremists. As noted in Chapter III, Stage Three includes a broad range of activism and reinforces the role that activism plays in identity verification. In Stage Four, Waters' case supports the framework's distinction for the criminal extremist category. In this instance the rejection of violence was the result of the moral directives of the eco ideology. Despite the different categories (criminal and violent extremist), the radicalization process was consistent. Finally, this chapter finds that VERA is not adequate in its current form for evaluating the criminal extremist case; therefore, the chapter concludes by recommending a new risk assessment instrument based on VERA that is specifically tailored for criminal extremists.

This chapter is organized into four sections. The first section reviews the CITIG framework created in Chapter III. The second section presents the two case studies, a white supremacist and an eco-extremist. The third section provides analysis on the

similarities and differences of these two cases and the final section offers summary thoughts.

A. RADICALIZATION FRAMEWORK

As described in Chapter III, the CITIG framework proposed in this thesis consists of four stages. Stage One begins with a personal crisis that is exacerbated by antecedent conditions, such as a lack of strong social ties that typically provide an individual with support networks and grounding within their existing identity and social structure. In a search to resolve the crisis, an individual will make new ties or find new ideologies, which result in the formation of a new identity that will continue to evolve throughout the radicalization process. Stage Two consists of the reframing of the personal crisis that links the evolving identity to a grievance through indoctrination that may precede or follow contact with extremists. An individual will progress from Stage Two to Stage Three when they take actions to gain acceptance and approval (identity verification) of the extremist group. In Stage Three the individual begins to engage in activism on behalf of the perceived grievances of the new extremist identity. Stage Four occurs when there is a lack of a resolution mechanism for the grievance or crisis and the extremist begins operational planning to execute a specific action, criminal or violent, with which to force a resolution to their grievance.

In addition to using the CITIG framework to analyze the cases, this chapter will also draw on VERA to identify specific attributes of the extremists. VERA is the first risk assessment instrument developed specifically for violent extremists and each of the various factors are scored on a low, medium, and high level. The items in the instrument will also serve as the basis for identifying specific attributes that appear at each stage of the radicalization process. This framework will be applied to analyze the cases of Kevin William Harpham and Briana Waters.

1. Case 1: Kevin William Harpham: White Supremacist Case Study

Kevin William Harpham pleaded guilty to planting a bomb at the Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Day Parade in Spokane, Washington, on January 17, 2011. Harpham built and deployed a pipe bomb filled with black powder and fishing weights coated in an

anticoagulant to create more casualties. However, law enforcement discovered the bomb prior to detonation; the parade was rerouted and the bomb safely disarmed.

Through the police investigation and trial, the personal history and motives of Harpham were uncovered, as was his path to violent extremism. Harpham's path to radicalization will be further analyzed below using the four stage CITIG framework proposed in Chapter III.

a. Stage 1

Kevin William Harpham was described as a generous man that always helped friends, beginning in high school and continuing up until the attack. In an effort to explore the world and save money for college, Harpham joined the military and served one four-year enlistment as a field artilleryman at Ft. Lewis, Washington.²⁵⁶ After leaving the military, he went to college in Spokane, Washington and earned a degree that allowed him to work as an electrician. While in Spokane, Harpham first formed his extremist identity.

In a blog post dated October 25, 2007, on the Vanguard News Network (VNN), Harpham replied to a thread titled "when did you become racially aware," and stated "... I went in the army in 96' [sic] and learned that niggers were an entirely different critter than I had thought they were."²⁵⁷ He claims he did not hold racist views at that point, saying "[i]t wasn't till around 2002/2003 when I stumbled onto Stormfront and found a link to William Pierce's broadcasts that I realized I was at war and didn't even know it. The next year was the most educational time of my life."²⁵⁸ Stormfront, an online chat board, was created in 1995 by Don Black and is one of the first successful white nationalist online forums.²⁵⁹ William Pierce was a central figure in the white supremacist movement who authored a number of works including the 1978 race war novel titled *The Turner Diaries*. The *Turner Diaries* is written as a series of diary entries from the

²⁵⁶ Heidi Beirich, "Alleged Spokane Bomber Fantasized About Killing Anti-Racists," *Hatewatch*, March 10, 2011.

²⁵⁷ USA vs Kevin William Harpham, 226–1, 27 (2011).

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 266–1, 27.

²⁵⁹ Julie Etchingham, "Hate.Com Expands on the Net," *BBC*, January 12, 2000.

perspective of the character Earl Turner, who is part of an organization battling the United States. The book concludes when the white supremacist group defeats the government and exterminates all other races.²⁶⁰ Pierce also founded the National Alliance in 1974, a white nationalist organization, with the goal of spreading his ideology about race, religion, and the future of the United States. Pierce was a prolific writer, speaker, and advocate for the white supremacy movement. His papers, lectures, podcasts, and videos are still an inspirational force today.

The *Turner Diaries*, along with the postings on Stormfront, became key documents that motivated Harpham and his path to radicalization. Harpham's blog post indicates that he first formed his extremist identity in 2002, in response to a personal crisis based on his interaction with other races and lack of prosocial ties that would help alleviate the crisis. Harpham acknowledged that he first perceived a difference in races in the military. This perception likely continued while he was enrolled in college. In addition to his racial crisis, the lack of prosocial ties, which serve as a protective factor, created a personal crisis that began the radicalization process. His description of "the most educational time of my life"²⁶¹ refers to his ideological indoctrination that occurs in Stage Two.

b. Stage 2

In 2004, Harpham finished his degree and moved from Spokane to East Wenatchee, Washington,²⁶² where he joined the National Alliance in February of that year.²⁶³ William Pierce and the National Alliance organization became central to the modern white extremist movement and to Harpham. Pierce was a source of indoctrination for Harpham and the first extremist contact that Harpham made. The National Alliance did not maintain an exclusive residence or compound where members lived, so joining

²⁶⁰ Andrew Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries* (Hillsboro, MD: National Vanguard Books, 1978).

²⁶¹ USA vs Kevin William Harpham, 226–1.

²⁶² Bill Morlin, "The Spokane Bomb Attempt: Who Is Kevin William Harpham?," *Hatewatch*, March 10, 2011.

²⁶³ USA vs Kevin William Harpham, 225–3.

the group meant little more than adding his name to a roster and receiving a membership card, but the membership served as a hub for further indoctrination and extremist ties.

In November 2004, Harpham joined the VNN under the name “Joe Snuffy.” VNN was a message board that provides digital space for white supremacists to meet and interact. Harpham had a strong connection to Glenn Miller, who ran VNN at the time. Miller was the head of the White Patriot Party in the 1980s, in addition to being a former leader of the Carolina Knights of the KKK. He was also the editor of the newspaper *The Aryan Alternative*.²⁶⁴

Both message boards, Stormfront and VNN, allowed Harpham to access material that further indoctrinated him into the ideology of the white supremacy movement. White supremacy is not confined to one organization or even one goal. Simi and Futrell, for example, argue that there are four distinct branches of the white supremacy movement: the Ku Klux Klan; Christian Identity and neo-Pagan racists; neo-Nazis; and racist skinheads.²⁶⁵ Generally, white supremacists believe that Aryans are the superior race, and that all other races, including Jews, homosexuals, and non-Aryans have polluted the world. Some groups, like Christian Identity, believe that Anglo-Saxons are the true Israelites and therefore they are the chosen people of God.²⁶⁶ Simi and Futrell further argue that “Aryans desire a racially exclusive world where non-whites and other sub-humans are vanquished, segregated, or at least subordinated to Aryan authority.”²⁶⁷ Most Aryans believe that a racial holy war is necessary to purify the world of non-Aryan blood.²⁶⁸

Harpham focused specifically on a violent version of Aryan ideology. In a post dated January 19, 2006, he argues that while black people and Jews are the problem, “... IMO [in my opinion] if whites are to get through this alive, Xtianity [Christianity] will

²⁶⁴ Beirich, “Alleged Spokane Bomber Fantasized About Killing Anti-Racists.”

²⁶⁵ Simi and Futrell, *American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement’s Hidden Spaces of Hate*, 10.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

need a bullet.”²⁶⁹ This viewpoint was further elucidated by a posting that he was disappointed that the *Turner Diaries* did not contain bomb making instructions.²⁷⁰ Harpham also used the phrase Zionist Occupied Government (ZOG), another term that is prevalent in the *Turner Diaries*. Harpham also drew inspiration from the video *Loose Change*, which argues that the attacks on 9/11 were a “false flag” operation, meaning that the United States perpetrated the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in order to invade Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁷¹ This narrative fits well into the white supremacist movement, which believes the Jews are secretly running the government in a conspiracy against everyone else.

Harpham identified with the anti-government elements of the ideology, but he also had other grievances that propelled him through the radicalization process. He posted “I have a deep seeded resentment for just about anyone with money.”²⁷² He further claimed that “[i]f things ever get real bad for me I will specifically target these people for the few hundred dollars in their wallet... The great thing about it is your [sic] doing something that benefits your race and your [sic] getting paid for it.”²⁷³ The white power movement does not discriminate against people with wealth, but Harpham includes this grievance into his larger extremist identity.

c. Stage 3

Harpham crossed from Stage Two to Stage Three in 2006. He began donating money to VNN, posting regularly to the VNN forum, and expanding his activism. Harpham began writing for a white nationalist newspaper, *The Aryan Alternative*, indicating his white supremacist identity was becoming more prominent. This level of activism rose from 2006 through 2009.

²⁶⁹ USA vs Kevin William Harpham, 226–1, 81.

²⁷⁰ Beirich, “Alleged Spokane Bomber Fantasized About Killing Anti-Racists.”

²⁷¹ Bill Morlin, “The Spokane Bomb Attempt: Who Is Kevin William Harpham?,” *Hatewatch* (2011).

²⁷² USA vs Kevin William Harpham, 226–1, 12.

²⁷³ Ibid.

In an effort to expand his contact with extremists, Harpham expressed interest in joining the Aryan Nation in 2006; however, it is not known why he ultimately chose not to join. One possibility is that the Aryan Nation lost its compound at Hayden Lake, Idaho, as a result of a lawsuit brought by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Harpham had expressed interest in the compound in a 2006 posting to VNN and specifically praised the idea of a racially pure farming community, arguing that it could be done with start-up capital.²⁷⁴ Given his desire to live in a racially pure community, the loss of the Hayden Lake compound may have removed the incentive of joining the Aryan Nation. Nevertheless, his blog post stating the desire to move to an all-Aryan compound demonstrates the growing prominence of his extremist identity.

In 2006, Harpham moved from East Wenatchee, Washington, to Addy, where he lived until the attempted bombing.²⁷⁵ While in Addy, Harpham designed and built a three story home by himself.²⁷⁶ The home sat on a ten acre plot of land that provided Harpham with the space to pursue his views without interference. His neighbor and tenant described Harpham as a very generous man during this time, checking on him daily, driving him to medical appointments in Spokane, and making repairs to his home.²⁷⁷

In August 2006, Harpham posted, “I can’t wait till the day I snap. Videos like that bring me closer to it every time I watch them. Fear of death is the only thing stopping me...”²⁷⁸ The post was in response to a YouTube video that showed German police responding to an incident between anti-fascists and neo-Nazis. Harpham’s desire to act showed his commitment to activism and the strengthening of his extremist identity.

Harpham also continued to strengthen his ties with other white supremacists and became well known in specific circles. Following an attack on a posting by “Joe Snuffy,” on VNN, Glenn Miller defended him saying, “Joe Snuffy is a generous contributor to

²⁷⁴ Beirich, “Alleged Spokane Bomber Fantasized About Killing Anti-Racists.”

²⁷⁵ Morlin, “The Spokane Bomb Attempt: Who Is Kevin William Harpham?.”

²⁷⁶ USA vs Kevin William Harpham, 226, 7.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 226, 7–8.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 226–1, 14.

VNN and to our newspaper projects. He's also a volunteer distributor."²⁷⁹ In 2007, Glenn Miller acknowledged Harpham personally on VNN for his monetary contributions saying, "you rank among the top 5–6 VNN'ers in total amount of money contributed."²⁸⁰ The money paid for 7,000 copies of the 16-page newsletter the *Aryan Alternative*. Harpham also wrote for the newspaper during his activism stage.

Despite being outspoken on chat boards and other social media forums for white supremacists, Harpham concealed his ideological convictions from those around him. Simi and Futrell argue that concealment is essential for the survival of the movement, and several leaders encourage adherents to hide their identity while in public.²⁸¹ Harpham hid his extremist identity while working as an electrician, while associating with his neighbors, and when interacting with his family. His mother and aunt both wrote letters to the judge during the sentencing phase of the trial that indicated that he was a generous man, and therefore, could not have had a hand in the bombing. Simi and Futrell further contend that the white supremacist movement needs hidden spaces, both physical and virtual, for adherents to meet and reinforce their identity, which is an essential characteristic of activism.²⁸²

Further postings reveal Harpham's violent intentions within his Aryan identity. In 2009, Harpham asked other VNN users for help finding the author of a World War II quote about winning a war through bombing.²⁸³ In 2010, Harpham also made a comment on VNN about the uselessness of the radioactive chemical thorium in building bombs. These comments suggest that Harpham was experimenting with bombs in preparation for his attack. The quote he referenced also shows that he believed his attack would help the Aryans win their perceived racial war. These comments effectively demonstrate his transition from an extremist activist to a violent extremist.

²⁷⁹ Glenn Miller, "Joe Snuffy," Vanguard News Network, 2006.

²⁸⁰ Beirich, "Alleged Spokane Bomber Fantasized About Killing Anti-Racists."

²⁸¹ Simi and Futrell, *American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement's Hidden Spaces of Hate*, 5.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ USA vs Kevin William Harpham, 226–1, 37.

d. Stage 4

Harpham spent approximately a year in the violent extremist stage prior to committing the attack. In 2010, Harpham began experimenting with building bombs. Following his failed attack, a number of books on how to build bombs were recovered as evidence from Harpham's residence.²⁸⁴ The investigation also revealed that Harpham built a test bomb to ensure that his would explode during the attack. Following the instructions of one book, Harpham designed his bomb and added fishing weights for shrapnel, which he purchased from the Walmart in Colville, Washington, in October and November of 2010, months before the parade. He coated the weights in an anti-coagulant to increase the lethality of the bomb. Following the attempted attack, the FBI recovered a digital camera that contained images of Harpham at the parade, in addition to close up photos of both African American children and an older Jewish gentleman wearing a yarmulke.²⁸⁵ These images suggest that Harpham targeted a range of people, all of which were well in line with blog posts and the demonized out-groups of the white power ideology.

Following the failed attack, the FBI and local law enforcement carefully dismantled the device leading to a wealth of physical evidence. They successfully traced the fishing weights used in the bomb to the Walmart in Colville, which led to the identification of Harpham as the suspect for the bombing. Due to the risk of arresting him in his home, SWAT officers created a construction zone ruse near Harpham's house and arrested him without incident. In addition to books on bomb making, law enforcement found an assault rifle in the trunk of his vehicle. Harpham pled guilty to planting the device and was sentenced to 32 years in prison.

Harpham began his radicalization process in 2002 as a result of the combination of exposure to different races and the absence of strong social ties. In 2003, Harpham became indoctrinated into the white power ideology and began developing contacts with extremists. Harpham became increasingly angry at the government, wealthy individuals,

²⁸⁴ USA vs Kevin William Harpham, 226–1, 226.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

and the concept of diversity which propelled him into Stage Three. Harpham began Stage Three in 2006 when he became an activist extremist as demonstrated by writing for white power literature, donating money to various organizations, and distributing material for the cause. In 2009, Harpham began to increase his skill in building bombs, including a successful operational test. This cemented his transition to a violent extremist. He remained in Stage Four until the attack on January 17, 2011.

The following extremist attributes are identified below in the medium to high range, using VERA.

e. Attributes

Stage: 1

- A.7 Hate, frustration and persecution
- A.9 Identity problems
- H.4 State-sponsored military, paramilitary training
- D.1 Sex Male= High
- D.2 Married <1year= High
- D.3 Age <30= High

Stage: 2

- A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying violence
- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.4 Dehumanization of identified target
- A.6 Rejection of society and values/Alienation
- A.7 Hate frustration, persecution
- A.9 Identity problems
- A.10 [Level of] Empathy for those outside own group
- C.1 User of extremist websites
- C.3 Direct contact with violent extremists
- C.4 Anger at political decisions, actions of country
- H.4 State-sponsored military, paramilitary training
- D.1 Sex Male= High
- D.2 Married <1year= High
- D.3 Age <30= High

Stage: 3

- A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying violence
- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.4 Dehumanization of identified target

- A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
- A.7 Hate frustration, persecution
- A.10 [Level of] Empathy for those outside own group
- C.1 User of extremist websites
- C.2 Peer/Community support for violent action (peer support observed)
- C.3 Direct contact with violent extremists
- C.4 Anger at political decisions, actions of country
- H.4 State-sponsored military, paramilitary training
- H.6 Glorification of violent action
- D.1 Sex Male= High
- D.2 Married <1 year= High
- D.3 Age >30= Low

Stage: 4

- A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying violence
- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.4 Dehumanization of identified target
- A.6 Rejection of society and values/ Alienation
- A.7 Hate frustration, persecution
- A.10 Empathy for those outside own group
- C.1 User of extremist websites
- C.2 Peer/Community support for violent action (peer support observed)
- C.3 Direct contact with violent extremists
- C.4 Anger at political decisions, actions of country
- H.4 State-sponsored military, paramilitary training
- H.6 Glorification of violent action
- D.1 Sex Male= High
- D.2 Married <1 year= High
- D.3 Age >30= Low

2. Case 2: Briana Waters: Eco-Extremism Case Study

Briana Waters became involved in the eco-extremist movement in the Pacific northwestern United States in 2001. Her involvement in the extremist movement culminated with two separate criminal attacks on property that consisted of firebombing both the Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH) at the University of Washington in Seattle and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Litchfield Wild Horse Corrals in Susanville, CA. Following the attacks, Waters disengaged from the extremist movement until her arrest by the FBI in 2006.

Waters grew up in Pennsylvania as the product of a split family, forcing her mother to raise her and her brother alone. She did not have a privileged childhood, but managed to perform well in school, impress her teachers, and received multiple awards for her achievements. Waters ultimately earned a scholarship and attended college at the University of Dayton in Ohio, until she transferred to Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, where she completed her education and graduated in 1999.²⁸⁶

a. Stage 1

In Stage One of Waters' radicalization, her transfer across the country to Evergreen State likely resulted in the severing of both strong and weak ties that she had developed and maintained throughout her adolescence. The resulting isolation during her search for social ties at Evergreen State created the conditions for a crisis of identity that made her vulnerable to radicalization. Transitioning into this new social network required Waters to develop a new identity to fit in with the social context of the new ties she developed. This environment included a network inundated with eco-extremists, including her future boyfriend, Justin Solondz, an activist extremist within the environmental movement. As a result, this triggered a reordering of identities within her prominence hierarchy. Waters' environmentalist identity then gained prominence while a reordering occurred to reconcile identity conflicts as her network of ties became denser with other eco extremists.

b. Stage 2

Marking Waters' transition into a latent extremist at Stage Two of the radicalization process, Waters developed dense social ties with both latent and activist extremists in the environmental movement, including a romantic tie with Solondz. In Waters' testimony, she admits she adopted many of the beliefs and ideologies in an effort to fit in with her peers. These beliefs included the right to damage property, but not harm humans.²⁸⁷ Her admission exhibits the strength and density of her ties within the eco

²⁸⁶ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 549 U.S. v. Briana Waters, 3. (W. D. Wa. 2012)

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 3–4.

extremist movement and social isolation due to a lack of bridging ties into normal society.

It was through these ties with various animal rights and environmental student groups that Waters was exposed to environmental indoctrination rooted in common beliefs, norms, and values derived from ecological theology. Ecological theology is comprised of two fundamental concepts: biocentrism and deep ecology. Biocentrism is described as the belief that all organisms are equal and deserve moral rights and considerations,²⁸⁸ while deep ecology requires the restoration of the earth to an imagined pristine state.²⁸⁹ It was these fundamental concepts that began to frame Waters' environmental grievance associated with her eco identity and provided moral justification for her actions.

Eco-extremism's ideological indoctrination framed three moral standards that Waters eventually incorporated into her extremist identity in stages two through four of the radicalization process. The first standard established that inflicting economic damage on those profiting from the destruction and exploitation of the environment was acceptable; the second advocated educating the public on the atrocities committed against the earth and all species that populate it; and the third urged taking precautions against harming any animal, human, and nonhuman in efforts to protect the environment.²⁹⁰ These moral standards led Waters to believe that the capitalist system was a fundamental threat and must be destroyed; that publicity was the oxygen of the movement for education and recruitment; and that the goal of operations was property and economic damage through arson and vandalism, not violence towards living beings.

c. Stage 3

Waters' transition into an activist extremist, which is Stage Three of the radicalization process, was marked by her participation in peaceful, non-violent, protests

²⁸⁸ Leaderand Probst, "The Earth Liberation Front and Environmental Terrorism," 3.

²⁸⁹ Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 15.

²⁹⁰ Leaderand Probst, "The Earth Liberation Front and Environmental Terrorism," 3.

in an attempt to find a political resolution for her environmental grievances. Waters' activism reached its zenith in 1999 when she helped develop an alliance between environmental activists and the community of Randle, Washington. She documented this effort in a film that she directed and produced called *Watch*.²⁹¹ During this time her eco identity was highly salient as a result of the combination of strong and weak social ties within both the environmental movement and the Randle community. This level of commitment demonstrates that the environmental movement had become extremely important to her, resulting in her eco identity becoming the master identity.

During this stage of her activism, Waters' environmental grievance metastasized with the realization that, despite activists' efforts, her desired deep ecology end-state to preserve the environment could not be achieved through activism alone. This realization occurred after the timber companies in Randle harvested 100 acres of 400-year old trees at Fossil Creek and sold the clear cut land, providing the timber company with additional funds to purchase more forests to harvest. As portrayed toward the end of her documentary, Waters' experience in Randle resulted in the realization that activist extremism could not stop capitalism, thus more extreme behavior would be necessary.²⁹²

d. Stage 4

During this time Justin Solondz, her boyfriend of over a year, met William Rodgers and became active in a criminal extremist cell called "Forest Defense," which used arson and other criminal acts against perceived enemies of the environment.²⁹³ Rodgers had been involved for years in underground ELF/ALF actions, including a series of arsons, as well as publishing "how to" manuals for sabotage and arson. This contact with Rodgers, along with a lack of any personal conflict resolution mechanism, provided Waters' boyfriend, Solondz, with the means to transition to Stage Four, criminal extremism. On July 31, 2000, Solondz participated in an ELF/ALF action that destroyed

²⁹¹ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 549, 1 (W.D. Wash. 2012), 3.

²⁹² Briana Waters, *Watch* (Evergreen, WA: Wikimedia, 2000), https://archive.org/details/Watch_Documentary.

²⁹³ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 490, 1 (W.D. Wash. 2011), 3.

five acres of canola crops in Washington state,²⁹⁴ and on March 18, 2001, he girdled approximately 800 hybrid poplar trees at three separate Oregon State University research locations, effectively killing them and the research they supported.²⁹⁵

It is the ties between Waters and Rodgers through Solondz²⁹⁶ that ultimately put the three individuals in contact each other.²⁹⁷ The combination of Waters' unresolvable grievances and the newly developed tie with Rodgers provided her access to ways and means with which to take action. She accepted Rodgers' recruitment offer into the Forest Defense cell in April 2001.

Initially Rodgers only used Waters to assist with small tasks, such as acquiring cell phones for him in her name.²⁹⁸ Waters performed other support roles, including arranging transportation needs²⁹⁹ and providing her residence as a safe location to manufacture incendiary devices used to set fires.³⁰⁰ However, on May 21, 2001, Waters operationally solidified her position in Stage Four of the radicalization process as a criminal extremist when she and other members of the cell set fire to the CUH at the University of Washington.³⁰¹ During the CUH firebombing operation, Waters served as a lookout to warn the team of any passing law enforcement patrols.³⁰²

Waters experienced a moral crisis from the extent of the destruction in the CUH operation. However, the pull of her strong ties influenced Waters to participate in a second criminal act. On October 15, 2001, the cell firebombed the BLM Litchfield Wild Horse and Burro Corrals in Susanville, California, because she and other cell members objected to the treatment and slaughter of wild horses.³⁰³ This became the last operation

²⁹⁴ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 549, 1, 3.

²⁹⁵ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 490, 1, 5–6.

²⁹⁶ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 549, 1, 3.

²⁹⁷ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 551, 1 (W.D. Wash. 2012), 3.

²⁹⁸ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 490, 1, 3.

²⁹⁹ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 551, 1, 3.

³⁰⁰ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 490, 1, 7.

³⁰¹ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 549, 1, 4.

³⁰² U.S. v. Briana Waters, 551, 1, 3.

³⁰³ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 490, 1, 6.

conducted by Rodgers' cell and it broke up shortly after the attack.³⁰⁴ Ultimately, it is difficult to identify what eventually caused Waters to disengage from her criminal extremist behavior, her moral crisis, the dissolution of the cell, or the loss of a romantic tie.

After 2001, Waters did not have any further known criminal involvement, which may have been the result of several factors.³⁰⁵ The first factor may have been that the breakup of Rodgers' cell deprived Waters of her means to remain an operational criminal extremist. A second possible reason for her retreat from criminal activism was a betrayal by Solondz. Allegedly, Solondz and Phillabaum, another member of Rodgers' cell, had an affair and Waters severed her romantic tie with Solondz.³⁰⁶ A third reason, argued by Neil Fox, Waters' attorney in the sentencing memorandum, was Waters' realization that her actions were a "...combination of youthful enthusiasm and desire to gain the approval of others who [sic] she respected and who she thought were seeking to improve the world."³⁰⁷

Whatever the reason for Waters' disengagement, she chose to sever ties with her dense network of environmentalists and started a new life in San Francisco, California, where she worked as a nanny, music teacher, and musician who regularly performed at charitable events within the community. During that time, Waters went through another identity transformation when she became involved in a relationship with John Landgraf. The two had a child together in February 2005 and lived together as a family until Water's arrest in February 2006.³⁰⁸

Between 2006 and 2012, Waters was the defendant in two criminal trials for her involvement in the CUH and BLM arsons. In the first trial, in 2008, Waters pled not guilty to her role in the attacks; however, she was found guilty on two counts of arson

³⁰⁴ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 551, 1, 4.

³⁰⁵ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 549, 1, 10.

³⁰⁶ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 551, 1, 12.

³⁰⁷ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 549, 1, 5.

³⁰⁸ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 549, 1, 5–6.

and sentenced to six years in prison on June 19, 2008, of which she served 28 months.³⁰⁹ In September 2010, Waters' conviction was overturned due to a series of errors and she was released. In 2012, Waters was again charged for her role in the two arsons, but this time on charges of conspiracy, possession of an unregistered firearm, arson and using a destructive device during a crime of violence. Contrary to the first trial, Waters entered a plea agreement and chose to tell the truth about her role in the attacks and provide testimony against Solondz for a reduced sentence,³¹⁰ so she could better care for her daughter, now that her "...main interest is to be a loving parent to her daughter, K.L., and to raise her in a way so that K.L. will not repeat her mother's errors."³¹¹

The change from Waters' initial plea of not guilty in 2008 to accepting a plea bargain in 2012 offers some important clues for the process of disengagement and de-radicalization. As previously identified, in 2001 Waters disengaged from criminal extremism and transitioned to a latent extremist. However, her disengagement did not translate into ideational de-radicalization, which requires a process of reordering of identities within her prominence pyramid. In 2008, Waters' extremist identity likely still maintained a dominant position within her prominence pyramid as demonstrated by being the only member of the cell not to plead guilty. After being found guilty and spending 28 months apart from Landgraf and her daughter, a reordering of her identities likely occurred. In her 2012 sentencing memorandum, attorney Neil Fox argued that "Now, at 36 years of age, an established violin teacher, and the parent of a seven-year-old daughter, Ms. Waters looks back at her life in 2001 with shame. Ms. Waters' main interest is to be a loving parent to her daughter, K.L., and to raise her in a way so that K.L. will not repeat her mother's errors."³¹² The attorney's claims suggests that her identity as a nurturing mother rose in importance over any previously related environmentalist identity as a result of the strong tie she had with her daughter.

³⁰⁹ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 549, 1, 6–7.

³¹⁰ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 549, 2. (W.D. Wash. 2012), 2.

³¹¹ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 549, 1, 1.

³¹² Ibid.

Furthermore, Waters renounced her extremist ideology and acknowledged that she had been motivated by peer pressure, misguided idealism, and a desire to seek approval.³¹³

Waters' case study of extremism shows a clear progression through both ideational and behavioral continuums of radicalization, disengagement, and subsequent de-radicalization through a process of identity formation, shedding, reordering of precedence, and access of salient identities due to both strong and weak social ties within her evolving social network. During this process the following extremist attributes were identified in her radicalization, as well as protective attributes in her disengagement and subsequent de-radicalization using VERA. VERA is designed specifically for violent extremism,³¹⁴ and therefore, a number of factors deal directly with violence (factors A.1, C.2, C.3, H.2, H.6, and P.2). Of note, in Waters' case, the VERA factors dealing with violence need to be modified to account for criminal action or support; otherwise criminal extremists would score deceptively low on VERA. This issue will be discussed in further detail in the analysis section of this chapter.

e. Attributes

Stage: 1

- A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging
- A.9 Identity problems
- D.1 Sex Female = Low
- D.3 Age > 30 = Low

Stage: 2

- A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying (crime)/violence
- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
- A.7 Hate, frustration, persecution
- A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging
- A.9 Identity problems
- C.2 Peer/community support for (criminal)/violent action
- C.3 Contact with (criminal)/violent extremists
- C.4 Anger at political/foreign policy actions of country
- D.1 Sex Female = Low

³¹³ U.S. v. Briana Waters, 549, 1, 1.

³¹⁴ Pressman, *Risk Assessment Decisions for Violent Political Extremism*.

D.3 Age > 30 = Low

Stage: 3

- A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying (crime)/violence
- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.4 Dehumanization of identified target
- A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
- A.7 Hate, frustration, persecution
- A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging
- A.9 Identity problems
- A.10 [Level of] Empathy for those outside own group
- C.1 Participant/user of extremist websites
- C.2 Peer/community support for (criminal)/violent action
- C.3 Contact with (criminal)/violent extremists
- C.4 Anger at political/foreign policy actions of country
- H.6 Glorification of (criminal)/violent action
- D.1 Sex Female = Low
- D.3 Age > 30 = Low

Stage: 4

- A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying (crime)/violence
- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.4 Dehumanization of identified target
- A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
- A.7 Hate, frustration, persecution
- A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging
- A.9 Identity problems
- A.10 [Level of] Empathy for those outside own group
- C.2 Peer/community support for (criminal)/violent action
- C.3 Contact with (criminal)/violent extremists
- C.4 Anger at political/foreign policy actions of country
- H.6 Glorification of (criminal)/violent action
- D.1 Sex Female = Low
- D.3 Age > 30 = Low

Disengagement

- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- A.3 Identification of target of injustice
- A.4 Dehumanization of identified target
- A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
- A.7 Hate, frustration, persecution
- A.9 Identity problems

- A.10 Empathy for those outside own group
- C.4 Anger at political/foreign policy actions of country
- P.1 Shift in ideology
- P.2 Rejection of violence to obtain goals
- P.5 Significant other/peer support
- D.1 Sex Female = Low
- D.3 Age > 30 = Low

De-radicalization

- A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
- P.1 Shift in ideology
- P.2 Rejection of (crime)/violence to obtain goals
- P.5 Significant other/peer support
- D.1 Sex Female = Low
- D.3 Age > 30 = Low

B. ANALYSIS

Consistent with the two Islamic-inspired cases, the cases discussed in this chapter follow remarkably similar patterns. Harpham found an ideology that led to contact with extremists and Waters found contacts that led her to the ideology. Both individuals became more committed to their extremist identities over time as a result of their extremist activism. Activism served to cement the grievances of the extremist identity and provided meaning for the individuals. Consistent with the CITIG framework, each case took a different path into Stage Two, but both individuals progressed in a similar fashion through the rest of framework. In Stage Four, Briana Waters, in support of her grievances, conducted a criminal act that was designed not to harm humans, a contingency consistent with the moral directives of the eco movement's ideology. Conversely, Kevin Harpham deliberately intended to harm people, specifically non-Aryans, with the use of bodily violence. Taken together, these cases demonstrate that the process of radicalization, while similar, can produce different outputs: the criminal or the violent extremist.

Waters' case is also interesting because it involved a romantic tie that served as catalytic factor. McCauley and Moskalenko argue that, "Trust may determine the network within which radicals and terrorists recruit, but love often determines who will join. The pull of romantic and comradely love can be as strong as politics in moving

individuals into an underground group.”³¹⁵ As posited by McCauley and Moskalenko and supported in Waters’ case, her romantic tie to Solondz most likely pulled her into the eco extremist movement.

Another important element from the case studies is Briana Waters’ disengagement from criminal activity. After conducting two separate criminal extremist actions, she disengaged from the eco-terrorist cell. Following her relocation to San Francisco, California, she met John Landgraf and started a family. During this time she abstained from both criminal and activist extremism. Just as radicalization takes time to reorder identities, we posit that de-radicalization will also require time to reduce the extremist identity. Future research should explore this phenomenon in more detail, since it has the potential to inform intervention programs. The creation of a prosocial identity that provides meaning and belonging for the individual may be a means to de-radicalization.

A third finding from the case studies is the apparent contradiction of the generous nature of Harpham toward his neighbors, family, and friends and his white supremacist ideology. The radicalization CITIG framework proposed in Chapter III acknowledges that each individual has multiple identities and that identities only affect behavior when activated.³¹⁶ Harpham’s case appears to support this idea. Harpham was extremely generous toward his neighbor, an elderly man, including taking him to doctor’s visits, shopping for groceries on a weekly basis and making repairs to his house. Even while in jail, Harpham asked about the health and well-being of his neighbor. This kindness exists in stark contrast to the individual who posted over 1,000 messages on a white supremacist network spouting hate and intolerance. The complexity of identities is one reason that identifying who is at-risk for conducting a violent extremist attack is so difficult. Similar to the path to de-radicalization, future research should explore this phenomenon in more detail.

³¹⁵ McCauley and Moskalenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism.” 421.

³¹⁶ Burke, “Identities and Social Structure: The 2003 Cooley-Mead Award Address.”

C. ASSESSING VERA

As with the Islamic case studies, VERA demonstrates good construct validity for both of the cases in general. In an effort to improve the instrument, several issues arise with these two cases. Three major threads of divergence emerge from the case studies: the difference between criminal and violent extremism, the unitary nature of contact with extremists, and the addition of contextual factors to the romantic tie identifying it as a protective or catalytic factor.

As mentioned, VERA is designed specifically for violent extremism³¹⁷ and therefore a number of factors deal directly with violence (factors A.1, C.2, C.3, H.2, H.6, and P.2). The focus on violence is appropriate, and the violent extremist cases demonstrate support for this, but a criminal extremist would score deceptively low because of this focus. Factor P.2 rejection of violence to obtain goals should be present in all criminal extremists, but does not offer a protective element against criminal action. VERA still demonstrates relatively good validity for the case study of Briana Waters, when modified to include criminal acts. We recommend a second instrument be devoted specifically to criminal extremists using the same factors in VERA as a base.

The second major theme of divergence is the representation of contact with extremists in a unitary nature. As the cases demonstrate, individuals with newly formed extremist identities are more likely to interact with latent extremists and activist extremists than violent extremists. Operational security is likely the reason for this, but the level of risk should increase as contact occurs with extremists who are criminally or violently operational. In order to account for this variance, the contextual factors should be expanded to address the diversity in contact with extremists. In order to expand this category and capture a more precise view of risk, specific definitions that cover the range of extremist behavior, like those proposed in Chapter II of this thesis, are required. Without relevant labels, it is impossible to accurately capture the variance in risk.

The third major thread of divergence is the protective value of VERA's factor D.2, the length of time married. VERA scores an individual as high risk if they are

³¹⁷ Pressman, *Risk Assessment Decisions for Violent Political Extremism*.

unmarried, or if they are married/ cohabitating for less than one year. The risk level lowers if the individual is married or cohabitating for more than one year. VERA was developed by examining factors in the HCR-20 risk instrument and the SAVRY risk assessment instrument.³¹⁸ Both of these instruments contain a factor that identifies marital ties as a protective factor. However, Briana Waters' romantic tie acted as a catalyst for radicalization into criminal extremism rather than functioning as a protective factor. This case study raises questions as to the validity of the factor in its current form in predicting risk. Future research should address this factor; specifically, under what conditions does a romantic or marital tie provide a catalytic influence in the process, and under what conditions does it act as a protective value against radicalization.

D. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the CITIG framework for radicalization was used to examine two cases: a white supremacist who was a violent extremist, and an eco-extremist who was a criminal extremist. These cases provide examples of extremist behavior beyond Islamic-inspired extremism and help to identify whether various forms of extremism are unique or share common elements. While each form of extremism has unique characteristics, the cases demonstrate remarkable consistency across the various forms of extremism.

In the next chapter, we will review the findings of the case studies, refine the CITIG framework from Chapter III, and propose strategies to address extremism in American communities.

³¹⁸ Pressman, *Risk Assessment Decisions for Violent Political Extremism*, 13.

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VI. REVISED CITIG FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGIES

This thesis began by providing a base of clearly defined terms relating to CVE, and using these definitions to create the four stage CITIG radicalization framework: personal crisis, new identity, activism, and criminal or violent attack. We then used this framework along with the VERA instrument to analyze four case studies of extremism in the United States: The first two case studies, which were based on Islamic inspired extremism, included Faisal Shahzad, who attempted to bomb Times Square in New York City in 2010, and Mohamud Osman Mohamud, who attempted to bomb the 2010 Christmas tree lighting ceremony in Portland, Oregon. The second set of two case studies analyzed Kevin Harpham, a white supremacist who attempted to bomb a parade in Spokane, Washington in 2011, and Briana Waters, an eco-extremist involved in two separate fire bomb attacks.

Overall, this thesis has found that the CITIG radicalization framework is useful for analyzing the process of radicalization across ideological lines. The findings further provide evidence for the use of the VERA instrument, with suggested modifications for assessing cases other than Islamic extremism. In addition to these findings, this thesis concludes by proposing a population centric approach to countering violent extremism along three mutually supporting lines of operation: prevention, intervention, and interdiction.

A. REVIEW OF FINDINGS OF CASE STUDIES

Building upon the existing radicalization frameworks described in Chapter III, this thesis created the following CITIG framework: Stage One begins with a personal crisis that is exacerbated by antecedent conditions, such as a lack of strong social ties that typically provide an individual with support networks and grounding within their existing identity and social structure. In searching to resolve the crisis, an individual will make new ties or find new ideologies, which will result in the formation of a new identity that will continue to evolve throughout the radicalization process. Stage Two consists of the reframing of the personal crisis that links the evolving identity to a grievance through

indoctrination that may proceed, or follow, contact with extremists. An individual will progress from Stage Two to Stage Three when they take actions to gain acceptance and approval (identity verification) of the extremist group. In Stage Three the individual begins activism on behalf of the perceived grievances of the new extremist identity. Stage Four occurs when there is a lack of a resolution mechanism for the grievance, or crisis, and the extremist begins operational planning to execute a specific action, criminal or violent, with which to force a resolution to his or her grievance. Figure 9 provides a visual representation of this process.

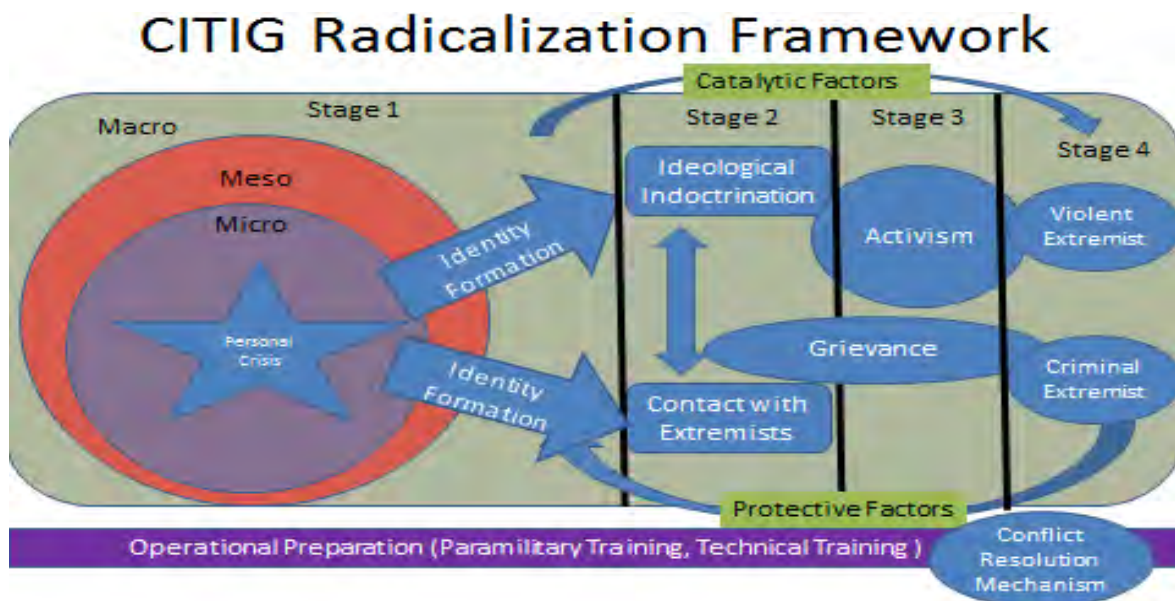


Figure 9. CITIG Radicalization Framework

Despite the diversity of demographic factors and ideological beliefs within the four cases studied, the framework demonstrates a consistent longitudinal radicalization process in each case based on identity prominence, contact with extremists, indoctrination, and grievances. Each case began at Stage One of the radicalization processes with a personal crisis, which initiated the reordering of identities within each individual. Mohamud's crisis was the result of a dissolving family structure, a sense of alienation, and a series of exposures to violence and loss during adolescence. Waters' crisis occurred as the result of a simultaneous loss of both strong and weak ties and a

search for acceptance. Shahzad's crisis was 9/11 and the resulting U.S. military action, which he perceived as a threat to him as both a Muslim and a Pashtun. Harpham's personal crisis was the result of a culture shock associated with joining the United States military that exposed him to races other than his own.

In Stage Two, the individuals became more vulnerable to the influence of extremist ties and indoctrination as they sought to resolve their crisis. These ties and processes framed the personal crisis, including any grievances associated with the extremist ideology. For example, in Waters' case, this process occurred with the creation of ties with eco-extremists and eco indoctrination at Evergreen State University. It was during this process that she internalized the grievances associated with deep ecology and biocentrism.

Following the framing of the grievances, the case studies revealed that the individuals all verified their extremist identity through some form of activism during Stage Three. For example, Shahzad, Mohamud, and Harpham all demonstrated their activism through online activities that perpetuated extremist ideas through blogging or writing for extremist publications. Waters, on the other hand, produced a documentary of the environmental protest in Randle, Washington.

The catalyst for the transition between Stage Three and Four in all four cases was the realization that activism was unable to resolve their grievance. This resulted in the individuals initiating either criminal or violent action in an effort to force a resolution of their grievance. For example, Waters demonstrated this realization at the end of her documentary, *Watch*, with a discussion on how political activism ultimately failed to protect old growth forests. Mohamud and Shahzad had similar grievances associated with a perceived threat against Islam from the perceived occupation of Muslim lands; they realized they could not change U.S. foreign policy through activism alone. These realizations, combined with the loss of prosocial ties throughout the radicalization process, became their catalyst into Stage Four.

Through the application of the CITIG framework, it became clear there were numerous antecedent conditions that led to each individual's identity crisis; however, the

common antecedent condition in every case was the lack of connecting strong prosocial ties for the individual in his or her time of crisis. As a member of a diaspora community, Mohamud lacked ties with those with similar ethnic, cultural, and religious identities, resulting in a sense of isolation. Waters crossed the country to attend college, which resulted in the loss of both strong and weak ties developed throughout adolescence. In each case, lack of prosocial ties magnified these personal antecedent conditions. As a result, it can be difficult to identify at risk persons in Stage One of the radicalization process.

The case studies further revealed that there are two separate paths to Stage Two: a path through contact with extremists and subsequent indoctrination through newly established ties; or a path through initial self-indoctrination that results in contact with extremists. No matter the method, once in Stage Two, the results appeared the same: the individual framed a grievance, or grievances, and linked it to the indoctrinated extremist ideology. It is in this stage that the ideologies created the moral foundation for behavioral justifications in stages three and four. Finally, the ideology's moral directives were essential to guide the individual's actions, including violence and even sacrificing of one's own life for the cause.

Within the case studies, the effects of ideology's moral directives are most pronounced in the eco-extremist movement. This is most likely due to the influence of their belief in deep ecology and biocentrism, which restrict what is deemed as acceptable behavioral action. The effects of these beliefs are demonstrated by the efforts of the eco-extremist cell, Forest Defense, to avoid harming or killing humans or animals, solely targeting property in their attacks.

Furthermore, through framing of the out-group, the extremist ideology affects target selection. For example, white supremacist Harpham selected the Martin Luther King Unity Day parade because of the diversity and concentration of non-whites attending the event, while Waters' eco-extremist cell selected targets associated with capitalism that threatened the environment. Despite these findings, it is important to note that moral directives are not static and will change over time.

A third critical factor in the radicalization process was the influence of romantic ties. In eco-extremist Waters' case, the relationship with Solondz functioned as a catalyst in stages two through four. Waters' relationship with Solondz pulled her into the extremist movement through exposure to an eco-extremist ideology, which reinforced her use of activism in support of an eco-extremist grievance and tied the pair to Rodgers who served as a facilitator. Conversely, after her disengagement from the extremist cell, Waters' romantic ties with Landgraf and their daughter resulted in a strong protective factor that most likely assisted in her de-radicalization. In Shahzad's case, the romantic tie with his wife served as a protective factor that delayed his progression through Stage Two, constrained his behavior in Stage Three, and served as an impediment to his transition into Stage Four. Future research should address this factor; specifically, under what conditions does a romantic or marital tie provide a catalytic influence in the process, and under what conditions does it act as a protective value against radicalization.

In Stage Three of the CITIG framework, all four cases demonstrated the role activism plays in verifying the newly formed extremist identity. As described in Chapter III, activism provides a sense of meaning for the individual through identity verification and provides a mechanism to address the grievances. For example, Shahzad sent email messages urging others to take action, professed his views to friends and family, and recorded the video with TTP to inspire others to conduct attacks. Mohamud, the other Islamic extremist studied, wrote articles for publication in *Jihad Recollections*, participated in a number of online forums, and tried to leave the country on two separate occasions to engage in jihad. Harpham, the white supremacist, began donating money to Vanguard News Network and posting regularly on their blog, writing for *The Aryan Alternative*, and attempted to join an Aryan Nation compound. Eco-extremist Waters participated in grassroots organizing and demonstrations that included civil disobedience, as well as directed and produced an environmental activism documentary called *Watch*. In each case, extremist activism served to solidify each individual's identity through a demonstration of commitment to other extremists and began to reduce the barriers for more criminal and violent behavior.

A second factor that is tied to Stage Three, and is necessary to transition to Stage Four, is the perceived lack of a conflict resolution mechanism. In every case, each individual developed a perception that their activism was unable to bring a resolution to their perceived grievances. Once each individual reached this conclusion, he or she began planning for specific action. Mohamud and Shahzad realized that they could not end their perceived occupation of Muslim lands and the deaths of their Muslim brothers. Waters could not stop further destruction of the environment. Harpham came to believe that a race war was necessary to eliminate or subjugate minority races.

In order to execute their action, each extremist required some specific form of technical capability, which took time to acquire. This capability was acquired either through personal experience or a tie with a facilitator. For example, Shahzad traveled to Pakistan to receive training from the Tehrik-e-Taliban. Mohamud acquired what he believed was a VBIED through his contact with Hussein. Waters' tie with Rodgers provided her with training in tradecraft and access to fire bombs. And Harpham learned how to build bombs from reading a variety of books and building test bombs prior to his attack. Based on the case studies, the acquisition of technical knowledge appears to be a critical component that affects the level of sophistication of the action in Stage Four. As demonstrated in Waters' case, small cells can maximize each individual's abilities for a higher level of sophistication in their actions.

Finally, in this thesis we posited that identity and social ties play critical roles in the radicalization process. An ideologically diverse set of cases confirmed that identity and social ties are critical factors throughout the entire radicalization process. We find that they are also essential to setting the conditions for disengagement and subsequent de-radicalization. In addition to the factors of identity and ties, we identified catalytic risk factors, such as grievances, travel abroad for training, and isolation from prosocial influences. The only protective factors identified were the birth of a child and romantic ties.

B. ASSESSING VERA

This thesis specifically recommends four areas of change to VERA based on findings from the case studies: the difference between criminal and violent extremism, the unitary nature of contact with extremists, the disaggregation and broadening of peer and community support, and the addition of contextual factors to any romantic tie identifying it as a protective or catalytic factor.

Due to the variance between criminal and violent behaviors, a criminal extremist risk assessment instrument is necessary to properly identify relevant attributes associated with the behaviors of criminal extremists. In order to create a criminal extremist risk assessment tool, several factors in VERA focusing directly on violence need to be modified (factors A.1 attachment to ideology justifying violence, C.2 peer/community support for violent action, C.3 direct contact with violent extremists, H.2 family/friends involvement in violent action, H.6 glorification of violent action, and P.2 rejection of violence to obtain goals). Each of these factors specifically focuses on violence and, as a result, does not properly assess an individual who believes in an extremist ideology that rejects violence, such as the eco extremist movement that morally rejects violence based on biocentrism and deep ecology. Despite the specific focus on violence, when these factors were modified to account for the acceptance of criminal behavior, they demonstrated good validity. Therefore, the modifications of these factors provides appropriate contextual factors to ensure that criminal extremists are properly assessed.

A second area of change recommended within VERA is the necessity for a factor that assesses the variance in contact with extremists. As identified in the case studies, each individual developed ties with a number of extremists during their radicalization process, which varied from latent to violent. In the case studies, ties with facilitators demonstrated a special factor of risk because the acquisition of technical knowledge appears to be the critical component that determined how quickly an individual transitioned from activism to operational capability. In order to account for this variance, the contextual factors should be expanded to address the diversity of contact with extremists, specifically contact with a facilitator. In order to expand this category and capture a more precise view of risks, specific definitions that cover the range of extremist

behavior, like those proposed in Chapter II, are required. Without relevant labels, it is impossible to accurately capture the variance in risk.

A third recommended change to VERA is the disaggregation of peer and community support for criminal or violent acts (C.2). This factor addresses the risk associated with external support for the individual's beliefs and actions. The case studies demonstrate peer support for both extremist beliefs and actions. However, none of the cases indicated any community support for either extremist beliefs or actions. Based on this finding, the peer and community elements should be separated into two separate risk factors in order to accurately capture the true risk level.

The final recommended modification of VERA concerns the demographic factor D.2, length of time married. VERA scores an individual as high risk if they are unmarried or married/ cohabitating for less than one year. The risk level lowers if the individual is married or cohabitating for more than one year. This factor was developed for VERA based on factors in the HCR-20 risk instrument, which assesses the risk of general violence, and the SAVRY risk assessment instrument, which assesses risk of violence among youth.³¹⁹ Both of these instruments contain a factor that identifies marital ties as a protective factor. However, the case studies challenge this factor. Future research should address under what conditions a romantic or marital tie provides a catalytic influence in the process, and under what conditions it acts as a protective value against radicalization.

1. Revised CITIG Framework

With these observations in mind, the thesis concludes with a revised CITIG framework for assessing the radicalization process.

a. Stage 1

Stage One begins with a personal crisis that is exacerbated by antecedent conditions, such as a lack of strong social ties that typically provide an individual with support networks and grounding within their existing identity and social structure. The

³¹⁹ Pressman, *Risk Assessment Decisions for Violent Political Extremism*, 13.

result of the crisis is the search for a resolution to the crisis which can lead to the formation of an extremist identity.

In Stage One, individuals demonstrate relatively few distinctive attributes. All of the individuals in this study exhibited identity problems (factor A.9) and presented a variety of other factors such as rejection of society and values /alienation (A.6), hate, frustration, persecution (A.7), need for group bonding and belonging (A.8), early exposure to violence in home (H.1), and military, paramilitary training at home (H.4).

b. Stage 2

In a search to resolve the crisis, an individual will make new ties or find a new ideology, which will result in the formation of a new identity that will continue to evolve throughout the radicalization process. Stage Two also consists of the reframing of the personal crisis that links the evolving identity to a grievance through indoctrination that may proceed, or follow, contact with extremists. In an effort to gain acceptance and approval (identity verification) in the new identity, individuals will begin activism.

Consistent with the CITIG framework, individuals demonstrated an attachment to ideology justifying violence (A.1) that included identification of the target of injustice (A.3) and dehumanization of the identified target (A.4). In addition to the ideological factors, individuals exhibit contact with violent extremists (C.3), participant/user of extremist websites (C.1), and peer/community support for violent action (C.2). The perception of injustice and grievances (A.2) is also present and accompanied by hate, frustration, persecution (A.7); rejection of society and values /alienation (A.6); anger at political/foreign policy actions of country (C.4); and low levels of empathy for those outside own group (A.10). The need for group bonding and belonging (A.8) and identity problems (A.9) were still present. In addition, a number of historical and protective factors were present including early exposure to violence in home (H.1); military, paramilitary training at home (H.4); rejection of violence to obtain goals (P.2); and significant other/peer support (P.5).

c. Stage 3

In Stage Three, the individual begins activism on behalf of the perceived grievances associated with the new extremist identity. Activism serves three functions: cementing the extremist identity, providing a sense of meaning and belonging for the individual in the extremist community, and providing a mechanism to address grievances.

The activism that is characteristic of Stage Three leads to further contact with extremists (C.3), anger at political/foreign policy actions of a country (C.4), and glorification of violent action (H.6). Activism can be in the physical world, like travel abroad for non-state sponsored training/fighting (H.5), or in the virtual world as a participant/user of extremist websites (C.1). As the extremist identity strengthens and indoctrination continues, individuals demonstrate a dehumanization of an identified target (A.4), and in some cases, internalized martyrdom to die for the cause (A.5). Factors that were present in Stage One and Two were still present in Stage Three.

d. Stage 4

Through repeated identity verification and the development of extremist ties, the extremist identity will rise to the master identity position late in Stage Three or at the beginning of Stage Four, suggesting the extremist identity will have the strongest effect on behavior. Progression to Stage Four occurs when there is a lack of a resolution mechanism for the grievance, or crisis, and the individual believes that criminal or violent action will be beneficial. The extremist begins operational planning to execute a specific action, criminal or violent, which he or she perceives will force a grievance resolution. Operational preparation may involve training and specialized skills from a facilitator, and the time required in training or acquisition of these skills accounts for the variance in the timing or sophistication of the action taken.

The attributes associated with Stage Four are very similar to Stage Three with changes in intensity. In some cases the individual will express an internalized martyrdom to die for a cause (A.5) that was not present in Stage Three, or travel abroad for non-state sponsored training/fighting (H.5). The perception of injustice and grievances (A.2) and dehumanization of identified target (A.4) intensify from the medium to high category. In

addition to these changes, some individuals will exhibit decreased identity problems (A.9) due the verification of the extremist identity. These factors are summarized by stage in Figure 10. Figure 10 visually demonstrates the increasing risk that an individual will pose as they pass through the radicalization process. For the full VERA coding form, see the appendix.

VERA factors identified by stage of the radicalization process			
Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
A. Attitudes/Mental Processes	A. Attitudes/Mental Processes	A. Attitudes/Mental Processes	A. Attitudes/Mental Processes
A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation	A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying violence	A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying violence	A.1 Attachment to ideology justifying violence
A.7 Hate, frustration, persecution	A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances	A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances	A.2 Perception of injustice and grievances
A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging	A.3 Identification of target of injustice	A.3 Identification of target of injustice	A.3 Identification of target of injustice
A.9 Identity problems	A.4 Dehumanization of identified target	A.4 Dehumanization of identified target	A.4 Dehumanization of identified target
H. Historical Factors	A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation	A.5 Internalized martyrdom to die for cause	A.5 Internalized martyrdom to die for cause
H.1 Early exposure to violence in home	A.7 Hate, frustration, persecution	A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation	A.6 Rejection of society and values /Alienation
H.4 Military, paramilitary training at home	A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging	A.7 Hate, frustration, persecution	A.7 Hate, frustration, persecution
D. Demographic Factors	A.9 Identity problems	A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging	A.8 Need for group bonding and belonging
D.1 Sex (Male = High, Female = Low)	A.10 Empathy for those outside own group	A.9 Identity problems	A.9 Identity problems
D.2 Married (< 1 year = High; >= 1 year = Low)	C. Contextual/Social Factors	A.10 Empathy for those outside own group	A.10 Empathy for those outside own group
D.3 Age(< 30 = High; >= 30 = Low)	C.1 Participant/user of extremist websites	C. Contextual/Social Factors	C. Contextual/Social Factors
	C.2 Peer/community support for violent action	C.1 Participant/user of extremist websites	C.1 Participant/user of extremist websites
	C.3 Contact with violent extremists	C.2 Peer/community support for violent action	C.2 Peer/community support for violent action
	C.4 Anger at political/foreign policy actions of country	C.3 Contact with violent extremists	C.3 Contact with violent extremists
	H. Historical Factors	C.4 Anger at political/foreign policy actions of country	C.4 Anger at political/foreign policy actions of country
	H.1 Early exposure to violence in home	H. Historical Factors	H. Historical Factors
	H.4 Military, paramilitary training at home	H.1 Early exposure to violence in home	H.1 Early exposure to violence in home
	P. Protective Factors	H.4 Military, paramilitary training at home	H.4 Military, paramilitary training at home
	P.2 Rejection of violence to obtain goals	H.5 Travel abroad for non-state sponsored training/fighting	H.5 Travel abroad for non-state sponsored training/fighting
	P.5 Significant other/peer support	H.6 Glorification of violent action	H.6 Glorification of violent action
	D. Demographic Factors	P. Protective Factors	P. Protective Factors
	D.1 Sex (Male = High, Female = Low)	P.2 Rejection of violence to obtain goals	P.2 Rejection of violence to obtain goals
	D.2 Married (< 1 year = High; >= 1 year = Low)	D. Demographic Factors	D. Demographic Factors
	D.3 Age(< 30 = High; >= 30 = Low)	D.1 Sex (Male = High, Female = Low)	D.1 Sex (Male = High, Female = Low)
		D.2 Married (< 1 year = High; >= 1 year = Low)	D.2 Married (< 1 year = High; >= 1 year = Low)
		D.3 Age(< 30 = High; >= 30 = Low)	D.3 Age(< 30 = High; >= 30 = Low)
		D. Demographic Factors	D. Demographic Factors
		D.1 Sex (Male = High, Female = Low)	D.1 Sex (Male = High, Female = Low)
		D.2 Married (< 1 year = High; >= 1 year = Low)	D.2 Married (< 1 year = High; >= 1 year = Low)
		D.3 Age(< 30 = High; >= 30 = Low)	D.3 Age(< 30 = High; >= 30 = Low)

Figure 10. VERA Factors Identified by Stage of the Radicalization Process

2. Prevention, Intervention, and Interdiction

In addition to identifying attributes that are present at each stage and the role they play in the radicalization process, the attributes provide insight into countering radicalization. Figure 11 depicts the CITIG framework with the addition of the proposed pillars of prevention, intervention, and interdiction. Each of these pillars is discussed in detail with a review of the prominent strategies that are present in the United States.

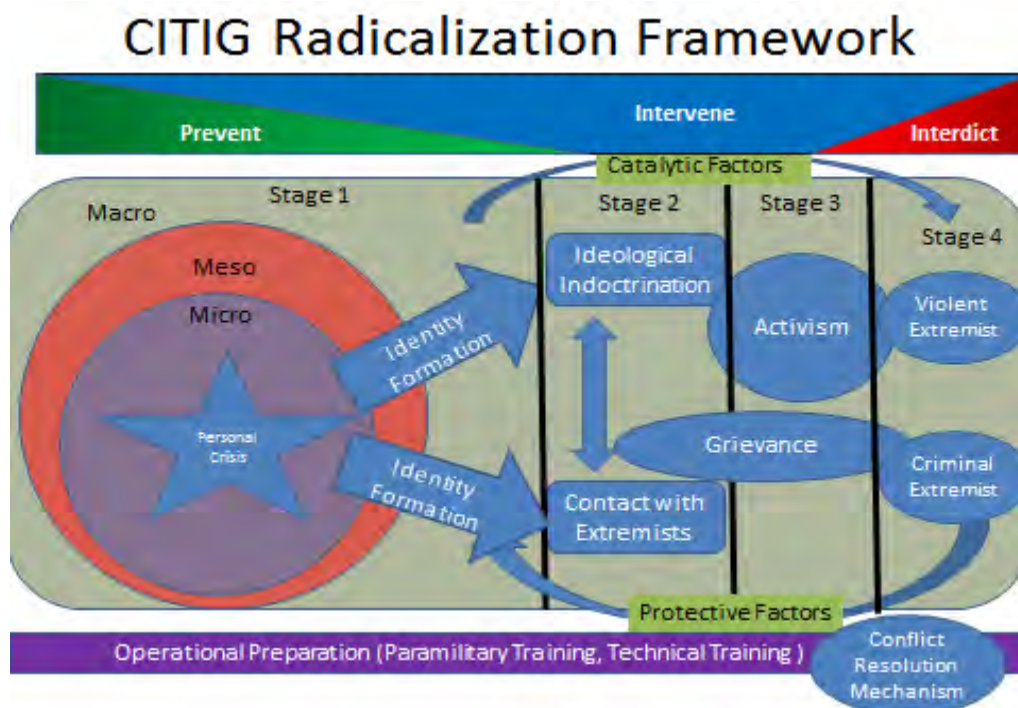


Figure 11. Counter Radicalization Efforts within The CITIG Framework

3. Applying the Model to Interdiction in the United States

Domestically, the United States has a robust state and federal infrastructure for interdiction efforts. However, due to the nature of prevention and intervention strategies, which require frequent personal interaction with a combination of strong and weak ties, the focus must go beyond a whole-of-government approach and become a comprehensive whole-of-community effort.

Due to the difficulty of identifying individuals within Stage One and early Stage Two, a strategy of prevention should be applied that focuses on increasing the resiliency of communities. This pillar needs to focus on creating cross-cutting ties between racial, ethnic, and religious groups to build strong networks through diverse sets of prosocial individual and community ties. As argued by the Los Angeles Interagency Coordination Group (LA ICG), this strategy is accomplished through “consistent engagement and a comprehensive network of partners (*public, private, and community*),”³²⁰ which is the foundation of their CVE strategy.

Both public and private organizations are necessary to create and build ties between communities. Within Los Angeles, the Human Resources Commission (HRC), a local government agency, has the mandate to develop cross-cutting ties designed to reduce discrimination, increase cultural competency and promote inter-group relations.³²¹ This agency functions as the focal point for creating inter-community ties, as well as ties between communities and the local government. These ties provide local communities and the government with the necessary connections and neutral environment needed to begin to understand and address grievances, as well as provide mechanisms for conflict resolution. The role fulfilled by the HRC is particularly important within population centers that have diverse beliefs and group identities.

In Los Angeles, a private organization, the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), has taken a leading role in developing an initiative, called the Safe Spaces Initiative (SSI), for maintaining healthy Muslim communities. As a bridge between the LA ICG’s prevention and intervention pillars, the SSI argues for a model of prevention, intervention, and ejection (PIE). The prevention pillar focuses on mechanisms that allow for grievances to be addressed through healthy alternatives to a path of violence.³²² The intervention pillar is comprised of both proactive and reactive measures uniquely tailored

³²⁰ Los Angeles Interagency Coordination Group, *The Los Angeles Framework for Countering Violent Extremism* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Interagency Coordination Group, 2015), 4.

³²¹ Joumana Silyan-Saba, “Government Community Engagement Methods: City of Los Angeles Case Study,” accessed May, 5, 2015, <http://www.ejournalncrp.org/government-community-engagement-methods-city-of-los-angeles-case-study/>.

³²² Alejandro J. Beutel, “Safe Spaces Initiative,” *Muslim Public Affairs Council*, 2014, 20.

for each radicalizing individual, in order to trigger their disengagement and de-radicalization.³²³ Within the SSI, the ejection pillar is considered a last resort and only used when the individual becomes a safety concern for the community and congregation, at which point it is necessary to involve law enforcement.³²⁴ The strength of this initiative is that it can be used as a blueprint for other religions and ideologies to address a broad range of extremism. Like the HRC, this framework focuses on increasing the resiliency of communities; however, since it is implemented within private institutions, it is able to comprehensively incorporate both prevention and intervention efforts in the same framework. The PIE model is depicted in Figure 12.



Figure 12. Safe Spaces Initiative PIE Model³²⁵

Similar to the intervention focus of the SSI, Montgomery County Maryland has developed a community based voluntary intervention program called Crossroads. This county and federally funded program uses a holistic approach to mitigate and counter radicalization risk factors.³²⁶ It accomplishes this through individually tailored treatment plans designed to reduce ideological, psychological, economic, and sociological motivating factors,³²⁷ such as those identified with VERA, that lead to radicalization. The

³²³ Beutel, "Safe Spaces Initiative," 56.

³²⁴ Beutel, "Safe Spaces Initiative," 86.

³²⁵ Ibid., 18.

³²⁶ "The Montgomery County Model," accessed May 5, 2015, <http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Montgomery%20County%20MD%20Community%20Partnership%20Model-WORDE%20Report.pdf>.

³²⁷ Ibid.

strength of the crossroads program is its formalized access to resources and intervention teams to identify, assess, and address risk factors.

Combined, SSI and the crossroads program provide a comprehensive public and private whole-of-community approach to both prevention and intervention. The strengths of these programs complement each other. SSI provides communities with internal methods to increase resilience by building capacity through awareness and education. What SSI lacks is a comprehensive source of resources for their leaders to easily access during an intervention that consists of disengagement and de-radicalization. This is where the Crossroads program would be able to support intervention efforts, like SSI, by providing a centralized location to access resources that streamline the intervention process. Both programs seek to educate and build awareness, but the fact that SSI is implemented within a community without ties to government funding increases the perceived legitimacy among vulnerable individuals and the community.

Within the CVE strategy, the role of law enforcement is typically framed within the pillar of interdiction. This effort consists of the investigation, arrest, and prosecution of individuals who are intent on committing violence or crime associated with extremism.³²⁸ Domestic law enforcement operates in an extremely efficient manner within this pillar, while taking measures to uphold civil rights and civil liberties. However, the role of law enforcement bridges all three CVE pillars in support of a whole-of-government effort. Within Los Angeles, the whole-of-government effort has begun to formalize itself as the ICG. The LA ICG is designed to extend interagency ties, as well as increase collaboration with community and government stakeholders.³²⁹ The institutionalization of designated roles and functions within the LA ICG will continue to improve the effectiveness of the ad hoc organization and increase its resiliency from the disruptive loss of key personalities over time.

As a broad strategy, law enforcement agencies across the country have begun to leverage community-oriented policing in an effort to build ties and trust within vulnerable

³²⁸ Los Angeles Interagency Coordination Group, *The Los Angeles Framework for Countering Violent Extremism* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Interagency Coordination Group, 2015), 8.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

communities in order to support the communities' prevention and intervention efforts. Community-oriented policing should emphasize the separation of community outreach from investigative activities in order to build and maintain trust with the community.

C. CVE STRATEGY

1. Prevention

As discussed in this thesis, prevention requires both a public and private effort. HRC fills the role of building inter-community ties, while the Safe Spaces Initiative provides an example of a private organization that increases the resiliency of the community through intra community ties. The partnership of public and private organizations leverages the strengths of each and mitigates the weaknesses. Together these two elements should address local factors that include grievances, the extremist ideologies, the acceptance of violence, awareness of the problem, and the development of both prosocial and cross-cutting ties to build socially cohesive communities that provide the framework to support those who experience crisis.

The private/public partnership provides an interface for academia to conduct further research on the risk factors associated with Stage One and Two of the radicalization process. This will allow for the refinement of both the risk factors and roles of the private/public partnership.

2. Intervention

By its nature, intervention should focus on the individuals who have demonstrated risk factors associated with Stage Two and Three of the radicalization process. Intervention can still occur in Stage Four but the goal of intervention programs is to identify individuals who have not fully formed their extremist identity. Once the extremist identity becomes the master identity, and the individual discards ties with people associated with non-extremist identities, the task of de-radicalization becomes more difficult. Due to the relatively consistent attributes associated with Stage Two and Three, intervention efforts can be applied to a broad range of factors that mutually support each other. The combination of SSI and the Crossroads program provide the

blueprint to efficiently execute intervention through individually tailored treatment packages to ensure individuals remain disengaged and promote de-radicalization. Intervention efforts should build prosocial ties with non-extremist individuals and groups, address the personal crisis that began the process through means that may include psychological counseling, counter the extremist ideology, identify positive outlets for social change, develop the belief that crime and violence do not solve problems, and work to sever extremist ties.

The relationship between LAPD, HRC, and SSI, provides an example of a mutually beneficial relationship that enhances law enforcement's ability to protect the public, the communities' ability to address internal concerns, and the ability to build cross-community ties. With the addition of the LA ICG, the goal of a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach can be achieved. The LA ICG provides the interface for the resources associated with the various government agencies that is so critical for at-risk individuals, including Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Justice. Trust and credibility are the glue that hold this delicate relationship together and allows it to function. Each party must recognize the role that trust plays in the relationship and work to build trust and institutionalize the ties between organizations.

3. Interdiction

The interdiction effort is an important aspect of CVE, but the larger discussion of interdiction is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, we have two specific recommendations. The first recommendation is to separate intelligence collection efforts from community engagement associated with prevention and intervention efforts in order to maintain trust with communities. Second, all reasonable efforts should be made to divert individuals into intervention programs rather than confinement with no specialized de-radicalization programs. This requirement must be balanced against the need for social justice.

D. CONCLUSION

This thesis has aimed to contribute to the understanding of the radicalization process and extremism. In doing so, we presented a base of clearly defined terms and a radicalization framework based upon the interaction of identity, contact with extremists, ideological indoctrination, and framed grievance. From the application of an ideologically diverse set of case studies, we found evidence to support the longitudinal radicalization process. Using the VERA instrument, we further identified that the stages of the CITIG framework contain specific risk factors for which we propose a strategy of prevention, intervention, and interdiction based on Los Angeles Interagency Coordination Group's CVE framework with community support.

APPENDIX. VERA CODING RESPONSE FORM

VIOLENT EXTREMISM RISK ASSESSMENT Subject: D. O. B.: Date: _____ Administrator: _____ Signature: _____				
Item I.D.	Items	Low	Medium	High
A.	ATTITUDE ITEMS			
A.1	Attachment to ideology justifying violence			
A.2	Perception of injustice and grievances			
A.3	Identification of target of injustice			
A.4	Dehumanization of identified target			
A.5	Internalized martyrdom to die for cause			
A.6	Rejection of society and values /Alienation			
A.7	Hate frustration, persecution			
A.8	Need for group bonding and belonging			
A.9	Identity problems			
A.10	Empathy for those outside own group			
TOTAL	ATTITUDE FACTORS			
c.	CONTEXTUAL ITEMS			
C.1	User of extremist websites			
C.2	Community support for violent action			
C.3	Direct contact with violent extremists			
C.4	Anger at political decisions, actions of country			
TOTAL	CONTEXTUAL FACTORS			
H.	HISTORICAL ITEMS			
H.1	Early exposure to violence in home			
H.2	Family/friends involvement in violent action			
H.3	Prior criminal violence			
H.4	State-sponsored military, paramilitary training			
H.5	Travel for non-state sponsored training/ fighting			
H.6	Glorification of violent action			
TOTAL	HISTORICAL FACTORS			
P.	PROTECTIVE ITEMS			
P.1	Shift in ideology			
P.2	Rejection of violence to obtain goals			
P.3	Change of vision of enemy			
P.4	Constructive political involvement			
P.5	Significant other/community support			
TOTAL	PROTECTIVE FACTORS			
D.	DEMOGRAPHIC ITEMS			
D.1	Sex (Male = High Female = Low)			

VIOLENT EXTREMISM RISK ASSESSMENT

Subject: D. O. B.: Date:

Administrator:

Signature:

Item I.D.	Items	Low	Medium	High
D.2	Married (< 1 year = High; \geq 1 year = Low)			
D.3	Age(< 30 = High; \geq 30 = Low)			

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